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Fall
2015
Issue 12

Inns, Taverns, & Way Stations

Amalric's Shrine
faith is key

A Fighter, Magic-User, & Cleric Walk Into A Bar
this is not the joke you are looking for

Monsters As A Playable Race
not BTB ... or is it?

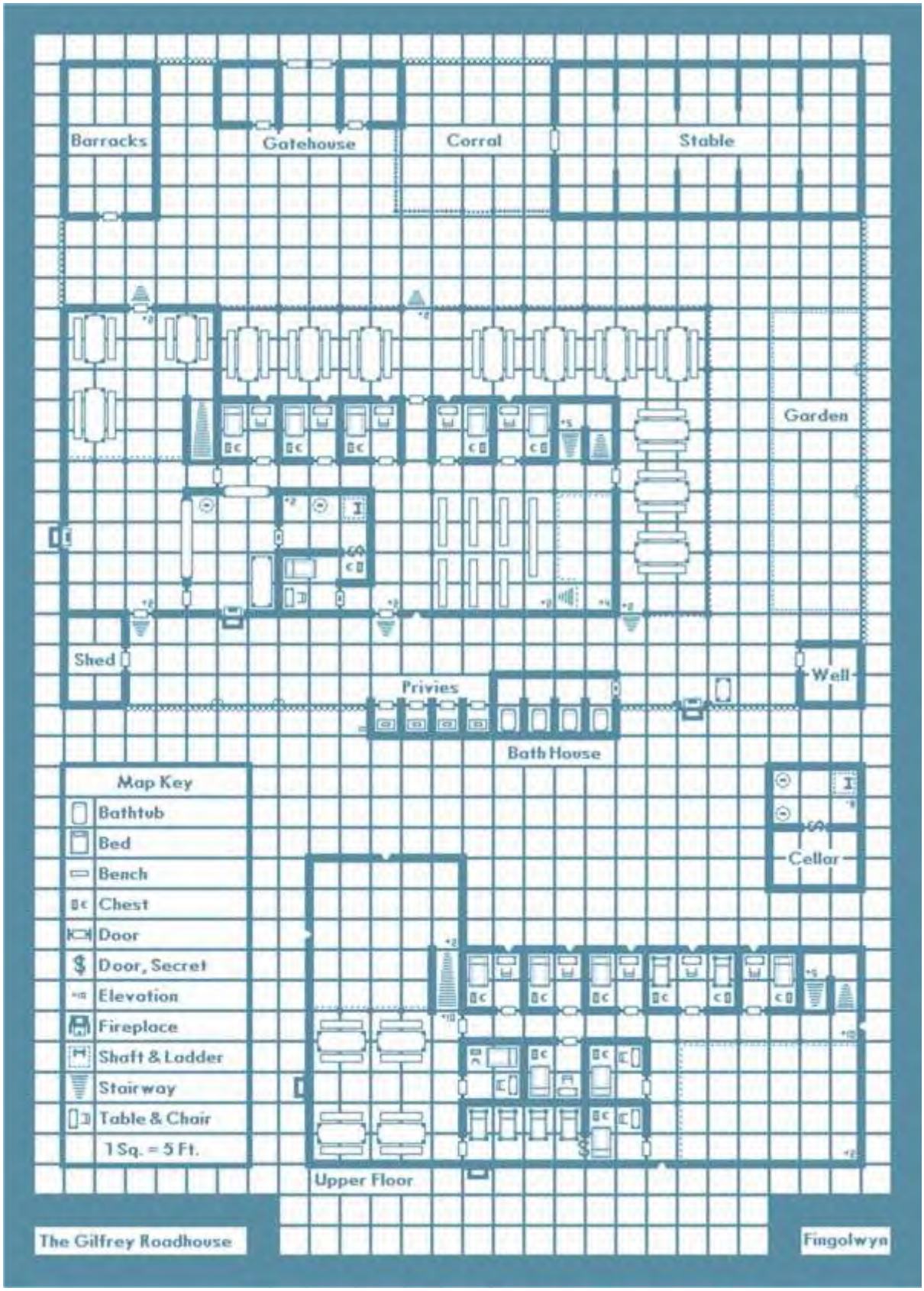
BONUS ARTICLE

Luck Beyond The Roll
a bit more helps

And-Mag.com

Map 1: Gilfrey Roadhouse

by M. W. Poort (AKA Fingolwyn)



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The theme of this quarter's magazine is

Inns, Taverns, and Way Stations

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Featured Artist

This month's cover artist is Caleb Horowitz.

Since Caleb's art graced the cover of our premier issue, he is our "oldest" artist. This issue is his fifth outing, including two adventure supplements, and his line art has enhanced more than half of our publications.

He is now a student at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, beginning a degree in Creative Writing, As in the past, his non-D&D time is spent playing trumpet, sketching, painting, writing, and playing The Legend of Zelda.

Interior Art

Since our first issue, & Magazine has featured amateur artists and given them a place to strut their stuff. This issue's artists are:

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& Musings

by Bryan Fazekas

Thoughts from the chief editor

First, I extend the & team's welcome to Leon, our new Submissions Administrator. Anyone submitting articles for publication will be emailing with Leon.

We also welcome new authors and new artists! Check out page 3 to see the list of the folks who make & Magazine what it is.

This issue's production was hectic, following *Humanoids* (#11). Since our hiatus last winter we have striven to slide back into our old routine of publishing a magazine every 3 months. But we kept our normal quality standard, and are happy with the final product.

#13, Character Races, is well under way. You can expect that one in November and we'll have some interesting alternatives to consider.

#14, Not Demons Nor Devils. As I stated in Issue #11, this theme is about the Lower Planes, but we specifically are excluding demons and devils. They are done heavily elsewhere, especially in the *AD&D* official books.

What can you, the reader, expect?

This topic is wide open. There are other "official" races such as daemons and demodands which can be expanded by the addition of new sub-races, descriptions of life and politics. There may be new races -- I wish I had saved The Greymen (published in Issue #7) for this issue!

What else? Maybe spells and magic items specific to the Lower Planes, new rules on how magic and spells change there. Or maybe how magic and spells of the Outer Planes change on the Prime Material Plane?

This is fertile ground, limited only by imagination.

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Ecology of the Lonely Inn

by Bryan Fazekas

Can an inn exist all on its lonesome in the wilderness?

One of the staples of fantasy gaming is the Lonely Inn along a trade route between kingdoms or on the frontier. This inn is run by a proprietor with a family and/or a few employees.

I've used them in my campaigns, frequented them in the campaigns I have played in, and read of other DMs using them. The Lonely Inn stands alone along the road, far from any other vestige of civilization, catering to travelers in the best of situations -- or preying upon travelers in the worst.

Is this a rational scenario?

Let's think about this. What challenges does the Lonely Inn face?

- Monsters. This includes humans, goblinoids, natural creatures, and fantastic creatures.
- Supplies. Where does the inn get its operating supplies?
- Services. What happens when a horse needs shoes or a wagon wheel breaks?

Let's examine these challenges in more detail. First postulate an inn located a distance from any city or even a hamlet, staffed by the proprietor, his/her family, and possibly a few employees. Let's say three to six people. What problems does this pose?

Challenges

Monsters

Being situated away from the protection of lawful forces in cities and towns, what prevents the few inhabitants of the inn being assaulted by any of a number of dangerous interlopers? The most benign attackers might be a bandit group, ranging in size from a group of two or three

people up to dozens, even a trained mercenary company. The three to six person staff of an inn would be hard pressed to defend themselves from even a small bandit troupe.

That is a real world scenario, and it's difficult enough. What about the species common to a typical D&D world?

A band of kobolds, goblins, orcs, or hobgoblins present as much or more danger than bandits. Their numbers will often be larger, and they have racial antipathy towards humans and demi-humans. The ability of even a large inn with a large staff to defend itself against such a danger? Nil.

Consider the larger goblinoids and giants, all staples of the D&D fantasy world. A small band of ogres could easily pound its way through a wooden palisade, should the inn have one. Giants? With their penchant for throwing rocks, even a stone wall doesn't have much chance, given time and a supply of rocks.

Natural animals? Lions, tigers, and bears! As George Takei says, "Oh, my!"

Natural animal predators are more likely a threat to individuals than the entire complement of the inn, although one being digested won't appreciate the difference. Some species of herbivores are, such as bison, rhinoceros, cassowary (bird in Australia and New Guinea), wild boar, cape buffalo – these are all dangerous to humans. Again, it's primarily against individuals, although a stampeding herd of bison could cause much destruction.

Giant or prehistoric versions of predators might prove different, and a good feeding ground with food behind a pesky wall might encourage a predator to hand around.

Beyond that, let's not think too hard of fantastic beasts such as owlbears and manticores and how they can defeat common defenses. In addition to those that might climb a wall, some might go through or even under the wall.

Let's not leave out the scariest of all – the undead. Zero level humans -- even 1 HD elves and dwarves -- cannot defend against such without superior numbers and magical aid.

One single ghoul could destroy a small town in the course of a week, killing a family each night and waiting for them to rise as the foolish villagers bury their dead, not necessarily realizing that they are planting the seeds of their own doom. The concept of an ever growing band of ghouls ravaging the countryside makes sense – how does that Lonely Inn defend against this menace?

Food

Next let's consider food.

It's a given that most people like to eat. Those that don't like it? They do it anyway. It gets to be a habit and people keep doing it.

The inn provides at least two services -- a safe bed for the night and food. The safe bed is part of the building. But what of food? It's not likely the inn staff can produce enough of their own food to feed themselves and a steady stream of travelers.

In a non-technological world, food production requires personnel, time, and space.

Granted, the Lonely Inn undoubtedly has the space. If it didn't, it wouldn't be the "lonely" inn. Personnel is the primary issue – planting and tending a large garden takes people and is a full time job to grow food in quantity to serve both the inhabitants and travelers. Tending animals in sufficient quantity can be just as labor intensive.

Next issue? In a world without refrigeration or preservatives, *keeping* sufficient food on hand also proves difficult. Historically, drying, pickling, and canning was used successfully, but doing so on the scale necessary to feed a steady stream of customers may be prohibitive.

If the food cannot be locally grown in sufficient quantities, it will have to be shipped in from a nearby city or town, and/or excesses purchased from nearby inhabitants. Either way, transportation is required.

Services

If nothing else, the Lonely Inn requires services to tend to its own needs. Carpenter for construction, blacksmith to create and repair metal goods, tailor for creating and repairing clothes, leatherworker for creating and repairing leather goods. We cannot leave out cook, horse handler, and brewer (some form of alcohol is likely a staple). And finally, let's remember this is a hostile world, so armorer, weapon smith, and bowyer add to the list of services the Lonely Inn requires – just for itself.

The paying customers will also need these services, and likely more.

Can the Inn staff provide all the above services? Some yes, all no. Being good at a craft requires practice, and the 3 to 6 person staff of our mythical inn won't have enough hours in the day to do all of this.

Please notice that some things are not in the above list, including the production of iron/steel/other metals, cloth, leather, and other materials needed to practice these skills. While some could be created locally, again, how can the staff do this?

Solutions

It appears that the Lonely Inn, as postulated, doesn't work. What does?

Subsidized Housing

One big problem is supplies to keep the inn operating, and the ability of a small inn to pay for such and still make a profit.

It may be that a nearby entity subsidizes the inn.

In David Edding's *Belgariad* and *Mallorean* series, the Empire of Tolnedra supports a network of inns along the major trade routes. In addition their forces patrol those routes, providing protection from monsters to the inns and to travelers along the trade routes. The rationale in the books is that the Empire uses this network to protect its trade, to extend their influence across borders without adding the burden of conquest, and to keep their fighting forces in trim through actual activity.

While it seems a bit farfetched that other nations would permit fighting forces within their borders without control, the general idea isn't bad. [In the author's campaign the Sathean Empire supports inns along all the trade routes up to the borders of its neighbors.]

While the fighting forces cannot be everywhere, the promise of hunting down and destroying those who rob or attack the inns will prevent much aggression. Plus this solves the issue of supplies.

Another option is one or more merchant houses supporting one or more inns. In a campaign where commerce is lifeblood, the major merchant firms may understand the need for safety along trade routes. The cost of supporting inns and patrols is likely cheaper than the loss of caravans.

The merchant firms may work together to support a network of inns, or may work to cross purposes ... or may work openly together but covertly look for advantage over their competitors.

On the dark side, there is also bribery, paying off bandits, both human and otherwise.

Traveling Craftsmen

In the past it was not unusual for craftsmen to travel from town to town, offering services. While an inn would need to have a certain level of expertise in many crafts on hand to address immediate needs, the concept of traveling craftsmen makes sense. Such men and women would travel along the roads, stopping everywhere their services were needed, and staying as long as those services were needed. Room & board, plus trade goods and some cash would be the medium of trade for their expert services.

Over time this could become more formalized, so that instead of individual craftsmen, bands of craftsmen could travel together, providing a wide range of services, while providing for their own protection on the road by their numbers. [See *The Tinkers* on page 45 for an example of this.]

Fortress

Many of the preceding points illustrate that the Lonely Inn in the wilderness is a ripe target, one that would be hard pressed to defend itself against even mundane attackers.

So each inn must be a fortress of its own. It must be built in a defensible location, preferably on higher ground near a trade route, and will probably have some type of wall. Stone is best and an old inn may have that, although more likely the wall will be a wooden palisade. A solid looking defense may be enough to deter less determined attackers and convince them to seek easier targets.

The Lonely Inn may not be a building. It may be a small (or large) compound – the inn itself, a stable, one or more storage buildings, etc.

But the wall is of little use without people to defend it. The inn must have defenders, so there must be soldiers and/or people capable of handling weapons. If the inn is subsidized or the routes are patrolled regularly, the need for armed personnel is less.

But if not? The Lonely Inn needs more people – a mere half-dozen people is not sufficient. To be able to provide basic services the numbers increase to a dozen or more.

Classed?

A more critical consideration – what are these people, the tenders of the Lonely Inn? Are they mere zero-level humans or 1 HD demi-humans?

According the *AD&D Dungeon Masters Guide* on page 35:

> **Number of Prospective Henchmen:** Human and half-orc characters suitable for level advancement are found at a ratio of 1 in 100. Other races have an incidence of 1 in 50.

Does this truly make sense? In a town of one hundred people, is there truly only one person who isn't a zero-level? There are at least two ways to interpret this.

1. The above rule is for the cities which lack the daily dangers of the wilderness, so the incidence of classed characters outside of the cities will be higher.
2. The above rule is for acquiring henchmen who may progress in level. On the frontier most adults may have the skills of a first or second level fighter, but have no ability to progress beyond that. As such they are not qualified to be henchmen.

Each DM is free to do as they desire, but it makes sense that many adults on the frontier will be more than a zero-level. The extra ability of being a first level fighter dramatically increases survival against typical bandits and goblinoids. A first level cleric's ability to turn "minor" undead is a deal changer. Never discount the demoralizing aspect of a magic-user *Sleeping* part of a band of robbers – the robbers don't know that was the magic-user's only spell and are likely to flee before finding out directly what happens next. Same with a thief taking out a bandit at the back of the group, providing the illusion that the inn's complement is far tougher than it really is.

Community

Looking at human history all the way back to the pre-Christian era, it is common for communities to grow up surrounding outposts. Regardless of its origin and support structure, the Lonely Inn is not likely to remain lonely.

Who will gravitate to the Lonely Inn? There are a lot of candidates, which include:

1. Merchants seeing an opportunity for profit.
2. People looking for a new start. Young people looking for something different, ex-soldiers, tired adventurers.
3. Travelers who are tired of the traveling life. This could easily include the Tinkers (see above) who want to settle down.
4. Displaced persons. Anyone who is displaced for any reason, including war.
5. Criminals fleeing the law. 'Nuff said.

Unless there is a strong hand controlling things, the growth around the inn will be "organic", e.g., uncontrolled and with no plan for the future. So the community can be neatly organized, a sprawling mess, or anything in between.

What does the community bring?

1. Protection from monsters. In general, sentient attackers want an easy win, not a fight. A community of a few dozen adults reduces the likelihood of small bands attacking.
2. Food production. Many in the community will look to make a primary or secondary living in food production, selling the excesses to the inn and to the community at large.
3. Services. The larger the community, the more need there is for dedicated craftsmen.
4. Temples. With an increase in population comes the need for clerics and druids to tend to their gods' worshipers. The influx of magic using NPCs brings with it a greater sense of protection.

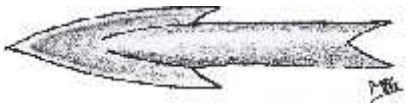
Lonely Inn?

Can the Lonely Inn exist?

Of course it can. Each dungeon master is free to do what they want within their campaign. Nothing has to be logical or make real-world sense.

The real value of the above points is inspirations for role playing. The Lonely Inn can be a simple stop, all details hand-waved as the party rests for the night and restocks.

Or the inn can be a source of adventure in its own right. The party can hunt down local bandits, or defend the inn from attackers, or deal with less savory characters around the inn or who even operate it. Interactions with the locals or other travelers can be a source of adventure or simple entertainment, and a small community near the inn provides more opportunities for both the DM and the players.



Knights of the Hallowed Grave

by Dan Rasaiah

A new NPC with a specific purpose

The fiction Amalric's Shrine *(see page 84) illustrates one idea for a non-standard use for a tavern. This section describes some of the ideas introduced in the story, the* Knights of the Hallowed Grave *and their nemeses, the* Vulghyr and the Grave Shambler.

Knights of the Hallowed Grave

An ancient chivalric order of Amalric, the Knights of the Hallowed Grave were initially formed to defend the lands of Esuvoran from the clutches of the Arch-Lich Letalis. The prevailing culture in the realm precludes cremating the dead, and as the Lich's scourge spread, the cemeteries of the land became ripe targets for the undead Emperor's necromantic powers. Realising the growing threat, the Church of Amalric began assigning its holy warriors as cemetery guardians. These 'Grave Knights' as they became known amongst the populace, were instrumental in allaying the Lich's incursions, and over the years their brotherhood was formally codified into a separate chivalric order of the Church.

Selected from only the finest warriors, those able to operate alone and without support for extended periods of time, Grave Knights are renowned for their dedication to Amalric and their abilities in dealing with the undead. The land's cemeteries are so numerous and isolated that rarely is more than one knight assigned to a particular guardianship. Over the centuries these skills have been honed and passed down, such that the order has become specialised in combating this particular evil.

Possible Gaming Applications

Note: Due to the solitary nature of grave knights, and the specificity of their mandate, it is recommended that they be used only as NPC's.

- Grave knights are paladins of minimum 6th level and have minimum 15 STR and minimum 15 CON and share the by-the-book (btb) abilities common to paladins with the exception of those listed below:
- They may turn undead as clerics of equivalent level, but turn demons and devils as a cleric of 2 levels below their current level
- Grave knights are affected by disease, except that inflicted by undead (e.g. mummy rot), to which they are immune
- Grave knights lack the ability to cure disease except that caused by undead
- Grave knights don't emanate a 1" protection from evil
- Grave knights gain a +2 bonus to saving throws versus fear caused by undead. This is in addition to their innate paladin +2 bonus to saving throws (i.e. a total of +4 bonus to save against fear)
- Grave knights are immune to ghoul and ghast paralysis
- Grave knights gain a +2 bonus to hit and damage when fighting undead
- Grave knights may lay on hands as a regular paladin, healing 1hp per level of the Grave knight once per day. For wounds caused by undead, they are able to heal 3hp per level once per day.
- Grave knights will have a thorough working knowledge of all commonly encountered undead, and will have a 10% chance per level to know specifics pertaining to rare or exotic types of undead. As such, they are often sought after as 'sages' when it comes to matters of undead.
- Grave knights may create holy water as stipulated in the rules for clerics (*DMG* p.114-115)

Vulghyr

Frequency:	Rare
No. Appearing:	1d10
Armor Class:	2
Move:	90'/180'
Hit Dice:	7+1

% in Lair:	10%
Treasure Type:	Nil
No. of Attacks:	3
Damage/Attack:	2d4, 2d4, 2d6
Special Attacks:	see below
Special Defenses:	undead immunities
Magic Resistance:	Standard
Intelligence:	Very
Alignment:	Chaotic Evil
Size:	L (9'-11' tall)
Level/XP Value:	VII / 1,700 + 10/hp

Creations of the Arch-lich Letalis, Vulghyr resemble giant winged ghouls, with black leathery skin pulled taught over jagged bone and corded muscle, and black bat-like wings veined wine red. They are wiry creatures but incredibly powerful, and have elongated ivory talons and fangs stained dark brown (see special attack below). Their heads are slightly more elongated than ghouls, and their ears taper to sharp points like elves'. Their eyes are slanted and range in colour from amber to blood red.

Vulghyr attack via a swooping charge (+2 to hit, double damage on a successful hit) and will seize and carry aloft man-sized or smaller creatures on a successful adjusted to hit roll of 18-20 (a successful save versus paralysis indicates the victim has eluded the grapple). Once grappled and carried aloft, victims will suffer a -2 to all combat rolls, whilst the Vulghyr will automatically hit with its bite attack each round. Victims are also often dropped from altitude with normal falling damage rules applying.

Once per day Vulghyr may vomit forth a foul concoction of their own blood, which will strike all creatures in a 5'x10' area. Those struck of equal or less HD than the Vulghyr must save versus death or die in 1-4 rounds from the deadly necrotic contagion (bonuses to hp from high constitution may be applied to the saving throw roll. e.g. a victim with 15 CON will gain a +1 to the save roll. If the save is failed, a *remove disease* or *heal* spell will prevent death if cast in time). Creatures of greater HD than the Vulghyr will suffer 8d6hp damage (save for half).

As undead, Vulghyr are immune to cold, hold, death magic, and mind-related effects.

They may be turned as Spectres and can be hit by normal weapons.

Vulghyr are relentless servitors of Letalis, and are often granted to his thrall kings as a boon. They fulfill many capacities, acting as the spearhead of most offensives, bodyguards to the kings themselves, and assassins of key enemies and personages.

Grave Shambler

Frequency:	Rare
No. Appearing:	1
Armor Class:	8
Move:	60'
Hit Dice:	6, 12, 24
% in Lair:	nil
Treasure Type:	nil
No. of Attacks:	3 / 6 / 12
Damage/Attack:	1d8 x3 / 1d8 x6 / 1d8 x12
Special Attacks:	fear, crush
Special Defenses:	undead immunities
Magic Resistance:	Standard
Intelligence:	Non-
Alignment:	Neutral
Size:	L
Level/XP:	6 HD – V / 425 + 6/hp 12 HD – VIII / 4,950 + 16/hp 24 HD – X / 18,400 + 35/hp

Grave Shamblers are magically animated conglomerations of corpses, mindless undead abominations under the control of the animating spell caster.

When the conflict with the Arch-lich Letalis reached full-blown war, the good folk of Esuvoran took to burying their dead in mass graves, such was the scale of the calamity. Whilst an efficient way to inter the vast amounts of dead generated by the conflict, it was a custom which was soon to backfire, as Letalis' vast necromantic resources went to work. Using a powerful form of the spell *animate dead* (*animate mass dead*) Letalis was able to raise the occupants of these mass graves, who over the time of their interment had decomposed and melded into large amorphous masses of moldered tissue (the constant drizzle and soil composition of the land may have been contributing factors). These arisen 'grave shamblers' are loosely grouped into three sizes (dependent on the size of the mass grave):

HD	Corpses	Description
6	3-5	3 functional striking arms, 6 functional legs, turns as a ghast
12	6-8	6 functional striking arms, 12 functional legs, turns as a mummy
24	12-16	12 functional striking arms, 24 functional legs, turns as a vampire

They are repulsive abominations, and will have remnants of human anatomy of all ages and sexes (decomposing heads, eyes, etc.) scattered at random spots throughout the mass. The sight of such a travesty will cause fear (as the spell) in all creatures of 3HD or less unless they successfully save vs. spells.

A natural attacking roll of 20 by a 12 HD or 24 HD grave shambler will require the victim to successfully save vs. Death Magic, failure indicating that he/she has been dragged under the roving mass, sustaining automatic crush damage per round (6d4 hp/round for 12 HD shambler, 12d4 hp/round for 24 HD shambler). On subsequent rounds, a successful save vs. Death Magic means the creature being crushed has escaped from underneath the mass (assuming it is still alive).

Grave Shamblers are slow, and always strike last in the round, and will attack until destroyed or turned.

They are immune to sleep, charm, hold, cold, fear, and death magic. Holy water inflicts 2d4 hp damage per flask striking the Grave Shambler.

Potion of Lightning Resistance

This potion provides protection similar to the **Potion of Fire Resistance**, but with respect to lightning and electrical attacks. The imbiber gains +4 on saving throws vs. electrical attacks, and damage is -2 per die, with a minimum of 1 hp of damage per die. The duration of the potion is 1d10+10 rounds.

GP value 250; XP value 400

by Bryan Fazekas

Potion of Neutralize Poison

Administering this potion has an effect identical to the 4th level clerical *Neutralize Poison* spell. It neutralizes any poison, but does not restore hit points lost due to the poison, excepting characters whose hp drop to 0 or less as a result of a poison. Such characters will be restored to 1 hp, although all rules regarding unconscious characters apply.

GP value 600; XP value 200

by Bryan Fazekas

The Tavern of Whyestill Cross

by Travis Range

This article provides a backdrop against which the dungeon master can place any desired encounter. It is therefore fleshed out roughly and only general descriptions of the people are provided. It could be a thieves' guild headquarters or a den of nefarious demon worshippers, just as easily this same tavern could be used as the home of a band of dedicated freedom fighters who oppose the tyranny of the local despot. It could simply be a tavern where good food and hearty drink are shared by doughty adventurers and a good tale may lead to treasure in the offing. It is left to the dungeon master to use as needed. For this endeavor there are three crews for the inn given for the following three situations:

1. The tavern is just that, a tavern. Perhaps it is out of the way and in lands not wholly settled but the Tavern Keep is prepared for any and all circumstance.
2. The tavern is the headquarters for a small thieves guild set not too far from a city or town. Woe be to the party who drinks here and shows gold too freely.
3. The tavern is an underground establishment fighting the injustice of the local tyrant.

The system used for this is that the descriptions for all of the areas of the Tavern are the same regardless of what it is being used for. Certain treasures that are personally carried by the individuals will be listed under their heading (Crew 1, 2, or 3) other things will be carried by individuals listed in the write ups for the room or entered in the write ups themselves. In this way, if someone wants to use this for different things all they have to do is generate a crew and add that to the list with the appropriate treasures.

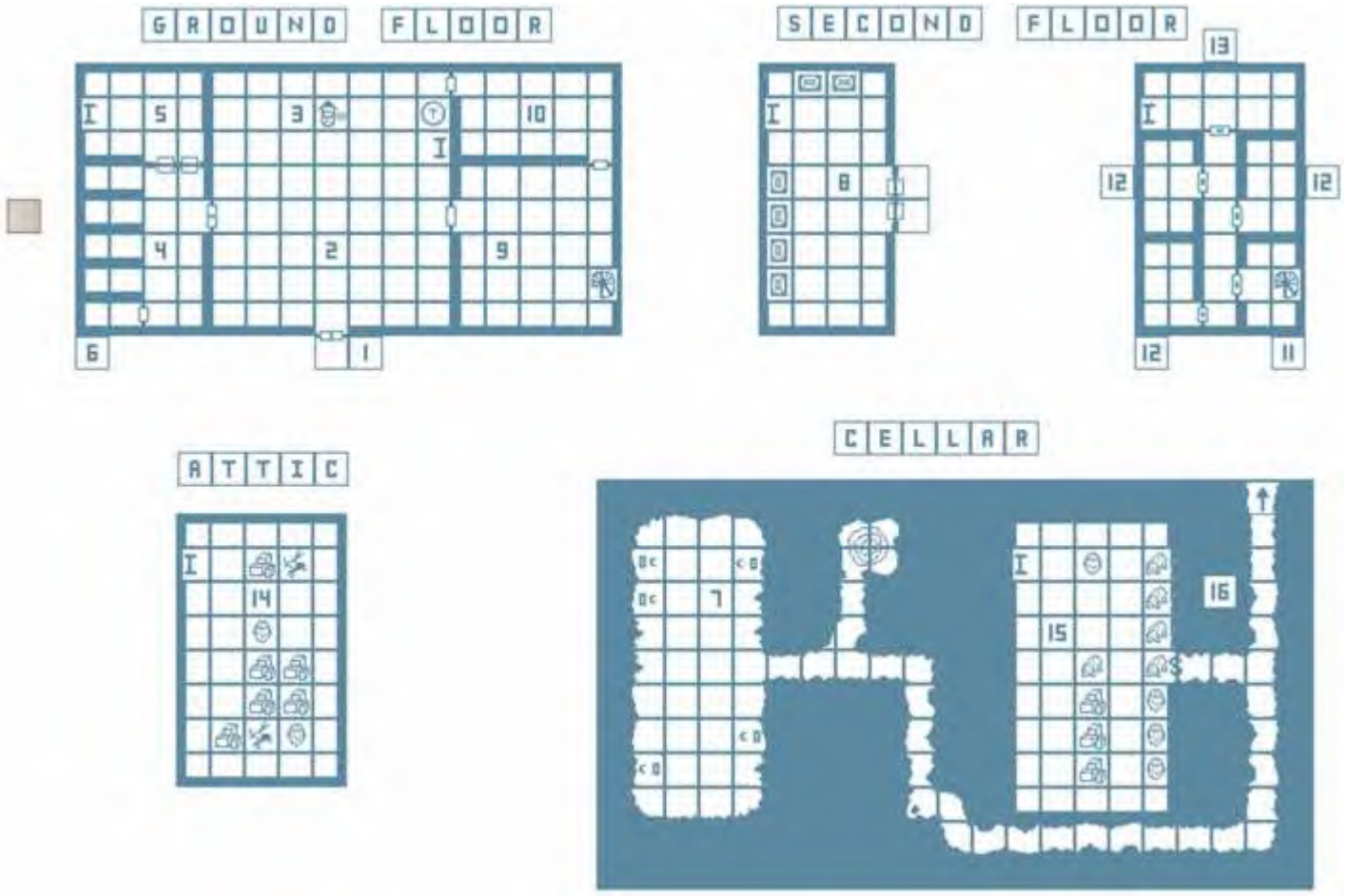
Whyestill Cross

The Thorpe of Whyestill Cross lies at an out of the way road crossing and is centered around a tavern, it is a backwater place with about thirty five regular residents consisting of 3 large families (about 6 children each) and some various others. The Thorpe consists of the tavern, three farms, a smithy, a tanner, a potter and a weaver. Goods pass through the Thorpe and every other week holds an active market day in the center of town where goods are traded openly with caravaneers. Several other outlying farmers will make their way to town in order to barter their goods with the merchants. There is a small shrine to the Harvest God and not far from town lies a druid's grove. From time to time these worthies will also appear on market days to trade holy water or other religious items for goods necessary to the churches and proselytize to the caravans.

The tavern is the central building of Whyestill Cross and as such is also the main defensive building in the Thorpe. It is a large stone building that has a main dining hall and will seat about forty comfortably. It has an 8 foot tall stone wall that encloses a large yard where chickens and pigs roam freely. There is a Lashing post and trough for horses and a small stone barn doubles as a livery for the tavern. The main gate for the yard is the only entrance in or out of the whole compound. A black marquis sign hangs above it with white painted lettering announcing the place by name. In the center of the yard is a stone well, dug some thirty feet. It is covered by a well house with a bucket tied to a rope for hauling up water. The whole of this establishment is well over three hundred years old.

The secret to this building is that it is deceptively passive. It is a building that upon close inspection was built to serve as a defensive stronghold. The walls are a staggering three feet thick at the bottom and there are fixtures so that a platform can be quickly erected about five feet up. The top of the wall has sharp shards of rock and iron firmly set in the mortar of the wall that is hidden from the view of the casual observer. The gate is made of strong iron-bound oaken timbers and the crossbar for securing it is a full six inch by six inch timber. It sits to one side of the gates in such a way that once the gates are shut it may be pushed into place by a single person of not much strength.

Hidden in the barn under the guise of floor boards is the planking and posts that make up the platform surrounding the courtyard walls. Under this planking lies another surprise: for once it is up, a trapdoor becomes visible that when opened leads to a hidden cellar that contains a large stash of weapons. Several barrels of spears, a chest of shorter weapons and many



suits of leather armor lie in straw oiled and preserved, hidden away waiting the day when they are pressed into service.

In the main building there are no windows on the first floor of the building. There are narrow windows in each room of the second story of the building. There is a cellar door on the outside of the house that leads down to a root cellar. In the back of the root cellar hidden behind a tun of wine is a secret tunnel that leads to a cunningly hidden entrance in a spring house of one of the farmers. It is shored stone and the entrance to the tunnel is hidden half under water in the spring house. It is also secured with an iron gate that has bronze hinges and a bronze lock. The whole is covered in a thick layer of grease to prevent the mechanism from making noise and rusting.

1. Gate: This gate described above is open most of the time. It is only closed during times of emergency. The timbers are iron-bound oaken affairs four inches thick that have the surprise of iron reinforcing rods driven horizontally through the beams. These doors are strong enough to repel boulders of the size that a hill giant could throw. They will withstand 300 points of damage before breaking.
2. Yard: The yard of this Inn is cobbled with flagstone for a portion just inside the gate but the rest is hard packed earth with a place set out for a large garden. A gravel path leads to the door of the inn on the right. To the left, two large wooden doors lead into the livery. Chickens roam the yard freely and several pigs occupy a pen with a small shelter in the far left corner. Toward the rear of the yard is a covered well with a winch. A bucket sits on the side of the well tied to the winch ready for use. Against the rear wall is a large stack of split wood and to the right rear corner appears to be some sort of root cellar access. This set of doors leads to area 15, listed below.
3. Well: The well is covered so as to protect it and help keep it clean. Travelers are allowed to fill their needs here for no charge. The well itself is a rock-lined affair roughly six feet across dropping about thirty feet with a cistern at the bottom that adds another thirty feet. The water is 20 feet deep leaving 10 feet of free space to the bottom of the

well shaft, and 40 feet to the surface. The water is clean and drinkable though it does have a high mineral content. The cistern at the bottom provides a ledge that hides a passage that leads off to hidden chambers in the cellar. The well acts as a natural amplifier for those at the bottom, allowing a person to clearly hear all conversations in the yard above.

4. Barn: This barn appears much as any other, though the floor of the barn is planked, which is unusual. There are eight stalls here for mounts and a large area on one end that is used for penning cattle and other livestock. There is a small tool shed that also doubles as a lock room where the 9th stall should be. At any given time there will be two or three horses for sale (40% draft, 30% riding, 15% Colt or Philly, 10% Light warhorse, 5% medium warhorse). There is also a 25% chance of appropriate tack or harness being available for sale. Prices will be 120% list prices.

5. Barn Floor: This main space is where cattle or other livestock can be kept. The floor here is covered in a thick layer of hay to make cleanup easier and to give animals something to bed down in (as well as hide the secret space underneath). As with most barns there are usually rats and mice (80%) in this space and occasionally (10%) 1-3 giant rats. Overall this is a warm sheltered space in the winter for the animals to take shelter in.

6. Barn Tool Shed: This small room has a stone fireplace in the far corner that is capable of doubling as a small smithy in time of need. Around this shed are the tools required to maintain animals and perform small leather mending tasks. There is a large brassbound chest that is used to store customers' valuables. It has a fine lock (-10% to attempt to Pick). The room is also used to store the saddles and other fine tack that is not common to the folk in the area. There is a stool where the liverymen can sit when performing some of the tasks needed. There are some items here such as needle and thread that can be used for spell components.

7. Barn Basement: This room is a hideaway for when things need to be hidden. It is uncovered in times of assault by the removal of the floorboards that make up the floor of the barn above when they are used to build the interior platform of the yard. Stored here away from sight are several suits of leather armor, a barrel of spears and a large chest that holds a variety of smaller arms. All of these are oiled and preserved to be able to deal with years without use.

8. Hay Loft: This loft is much like any other hay loft though the presence of many hinges throughout the loft is somewhat different. The edges of loft floor are opened to allow access to the mangers below the same as any other barn floor; the hinges are there to allow panels to drop down and cover the manger holes when needed. When the panels are down, ports in the walls of the barn are visible allowing a view of the nearby areas. These ports provide cover for archers in time of emergency.

9. Main Room: This chamber is much the same as any other tavern: sturdy oak tables and benches provide seating for patrons. Several smaller tables allow for smaller groups to sit with at least a modicum of privacy. At any time during serving hours there will be 3-24 patrons eating and drinking as appropriate to the time of day. If more than 7 are here then the majority (75%) will belong to a caravan and will bring news of other places with them. The locals that are here will likely be interested in speaking with the caravan members so it is likely to be quite lively. There will always be from 1-4 serving wenches here as well as a barkeep. See the Bill of Fare for prices.

10. Kitchen: This area is much the same as any kitchen in a similar establishment though it is fairly large and can easily be cleared of tables etc. There is a large fireplace with pothooks and other accoutrements designed for cooking. There is a large short-sided pan which is used for grilling and frying food. A butcher block in the center of the room is well used and stained black from use. A number of large knives (treat as daggers) and cleavers (treat as hand axe) are here as well. A corner of the room has a large basin and serves as a scullery as well as for laundering items. Some necessary adventuring items can be procured through the tavern here. There is usually a cook and a scullion here though at any time there may be a serving wench as well.

11. Upstairs Living Area: This room is used as a living area for the Tavern Keep's family. This room contains several chairs and a table along with a bookcase and a desk. The desk is covered in papers (ledgers) and an inkwell and several quills reside on one corner. There is a small candle holder made of silver and a bar of sealing wax (blue). The books in the case are of several mundane varieties and mostly cover subjects such as poetry, flora and fauna, and several treatises on brewing beer. There is a chest by the fireplace that holds several cloaks and spare clothes for the children. In a false bottom of the chest is a compartment that contains a small pouch with six gems and a small velvet sack with 200 sp and 50 gp. The compartment is accessed by completely removing all the items from the chest and activating a catch on the left side of the chest. The fireplace here resides directly above the fireplace located in the kitchen and shares the chimney. A door in the wall opposite the fireplace leads to the rest of the tavern keep's living quarters.

12. Main Bedroom: This bedroom is at the end of the hallway leading from the living quarters and contains a large bed with a feather mattress. It also contains a wardrobe and a chest of drawers. There is a stand with a chamber pot and a pitcher of water near by a window looking out over the fields nearby. There is also a desk and a chair here. This desk is much better organized and a stoppered inkwell and quill sit at the top. Another bar of sealing wax (red) as well as a several blank sheets of parchment resides in a drawer. Affixed to the bottom of the drawer by some wax are four small gems. Tucked away under one side of the mattress is a dagger kept there for emergencies. The wardrobe contains clothing for the Tavern Keep and his wife. The chest of drawers contains more clothing and some small personal items of little worth.

13. Guest Room: This room is well appointed but simple. There is a large bed with a feather mattress and pillows. There is also a bed stand that contains a pitcher of water and a chamber pot. Sconces on the wall hold fresh candles and at the foot of the bed stands a chest. The chest only contains objects if someone is using this room.

14. Attic: This room is as large as the entire footprint of the inn. This area has a wall that extends three feet upwards and the roof is hinged. Several strong men can push outwards and upwards on the roof from this angle and it will lift allowing several large struts to fall and engage. This will create a sheltered area where archers could fire upon enemies in time of attack. There are barrels and crates here as well as two ballistae hidden under canvas tarps in the far corners of the attic are two barrels of 50 javelins. Four of the crates contain stone balls for use with the ballistae and a fifth contains pottery balls stoppered with wax seals (containing oil for use as an incendiary round). Another crate contains six heavy crossbows and 6 light crossbows. All are preserved against the ravages of time. These items are arranged so as to be as inconspicuous as possible. A couple of barrels contain bolts for the crossbows. Other items that are found here are typical of any normal attic space.

15. Cellar: This area resembles the cellar of any tavern or inn anywhere else. There is racking for bottles of

wines and casks of various spirits as well as larger barrels for wines, ales and beer. Another section contains various boxes and barrels of root vegetables and dried or cured meats and other foodstuffs. There is an access for replenishing supplies that uses a crane from above to move barrels in and out of the cellar. One large tun of wine hides a secret entrance to the tunnel.

16. Tunnel: This tunnel is 6 feet tall and 4 feet wide, hewn from living rock. It is damp and dank. It extends some 20 feet before splitting off in two directions. One heads off in the direction of the well (area 3 above) and the other to the springhouse at a nearby farm. Other than the occasional rat pack (10% chance 1-4 giant rats) the tunnel is otherwise nondescript.

Personalities Scenario 1 (Just a Tavern)

In this scenario the tavern is used as just that. The list below gives statistics for the people encountered here. This scenario assumes that the Tavern is an isolated rest stop for caravans moving from one place to another (1 week or more travel to a larger city or town). This tavern roster is all human though demi-humans will be welcome. Rumors and will be available to fit the DM's desires and campaign.

Station/ Align	Age	Sex	Str	Int	Wis	Dex	Con	Cha	Ac	Hp	Area Found	Notes
Tavern Keep / LN	44	M	16	9	9	14	14	12	10 (7)	5	9 (10,2)	10gp, 25 sp, 25 cp leather armor +shield, dagger & short sword
Wench 1/ LN	32	F	12	12	15	7	9	12	10	2	9 (10)	15sp, 25 cp, dagger
Wench 2/ LN	16	F	12	15	10	10	16	13	10	8	9 10)	15sp, 25 cp, dagger
Wench 3/ N	19	F	14	10	14	16	17	9	8 (6)	7	9 (10)	1st level thief, leather dagger
Wench 4/ N	25	F	15	8	7	12	6	13	10	2	9 (10)	15sp, 25 cp, dagger
Wench 5/ NE	28	F	11	11	14	13	9	15	10	3	9 (10)	15sp, 25 cp, dagger
Liveryman/ LN	34	M	18	13	10	8	10	12	10	6	4 (2,5)	club
Stable boy/ LE	15	M	13	12	10	16	11	7	8 (6)	3	4 (3,5)	Thief L1, leather armor, dagger/ short sword
Scullion/N	11	M	13	12	10	7	9	6	10	4	10 (15,3)	dagger
Widow/ CG	87	F	5	9	7	11	3	13	10	1	11 (12)	n/c
Wife/ CG	41	F	10	10	11	14	7	10	10	2	11 (12,13)	belt knife
Son 1/ LN	21	M	13	8	13	13	11	10	10 (7)	6	2 (4,8)	leather armor +shield, dagger/club
Son 2/ LG	19	M	13	16	7	10	8	10	10 (7)	2	9 (11)	leather armor +shield, dagger/club
Son 3/ N	13	M	11	14	9	6	15	8	10	4	2,3,11	dagger
Daughter/ CG	8	F	8	14	13	11	13	11	10	3	11 (13)	belt knife
Cook 1/ CN	52	M	11	13	10	10	12	9	10	1	10,15	meat cleaver
Cook 2/ LN	37	F	10	8	14	7	6	7	10	1	10,15	frying pan

Personalities Scenario 2 (Thieves Guild)

This scenario uses the tavern and all of its secrets as a base of operations for a thieves guild. The guild master does not reside here but leaves it in the care of a trusted lieutenant. At any one time there will be several "guests" who may be thieves hiding out while heat dies down from the local authorities. This scenario assumes that the Tavern is within a day or two's journey from a larger location. Rumors can be had here and the gang will not be stupid about pilfering from guests--though, if they see large amounts of cash they will mark characters to be fleeced or robbed later.

Station/ Align	Age	Sex	Str	Int	Wis	Dex	Con	Cha	Ac	Hp	Area Found	Notes
Tavern Keep/ LE	33	F	17	15	10	16	9	13	8/6	20	9, 15,	Thief L8, long sword, sling, dagger, leather armor
Wench 1/ NE	24	F	9	12	13	16	15	13	8/6	14	9, 10	Thief L4, short sword, dagger, leather armor
Wench 2/ CN	21	F	14	14	13	10	11	11	10/4	17	9, 10	fighter L3, long sword, dagger, chainmail, shield
Wench 3/ NE	19	F	15	12	10	16	10	15	8/5	17	9, 10	Half-elf fighter L3/ thief L4, long sword, dagger, shield, bow, leather armor, shield
Liveryman/ N	41	M	11	12	12	16	13	11	8/6	14	2, 4, 5, 6, 8	Thief L5, broad sword, dagger, leather armor
Stable boy/ LE	12	M	12	14	13	13	10	11	10/8	3	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8	thief L1, dagger, leather armor
Scullion/ LN	11	M	13	11	10	13	12	12	10	2	3, 10, 15	0 level, dagger
Cook/LE	26	M	11	8	13	16	10	11	8/6	8	10, 15	Thief L2, club, dagger leather armor
Bartender/ N	36	F	14	13	16	14	11	14	8/6	25	9	thief L5, dagger sling leather armor
Bouncer/ CE	19	M	17	9	9	16	13	8	5/2	24	9	fighter L4/ thief L4, battle axe, dagger, light crossbow, chain mail, shield
"Guest" 1/ CN	17	M	13	16	12	16	13	11	8/6	9	2, 9, 12	elf, MU L2/ thief L3, dagger, sling, leather armor, spells*
"Guest" 2/ CN	16	F	14	9	9	12	14	13	8	2	9, 12, 14	thief L1, club, sling,
"Guest" 3/ N	20	M	13	10	7	7	11	9	10	5	2, 9, 12	0 level drover, club
"Guest" 4/ LE	17	F	9	14	7	15	11	12	9/7	10	9, 12, 14	Thief L2, short sword, sling, leather armor
"Guest" 5/ NE	14	M	9	12	14	10	17	10	8	5	1, 2, 9,	0 level, leather armor, shield, short sword

* Spells and spell book should be determined by DM

Personalities Scenario 3 (Underground)

This scenario involves an underground society that for one reason or another has placed itself at odds with the local Lord. In this, the tavern keeper serves as the gateway for a political front. The political goals in this scenario are left to the dungeon Master. It should be noted that alignment in this case has been left open for the dungeon Master to fit this into his campaign. Placement of this Tavern has also been left to DM's discretion.

Station/ Align	Age	Sex	Str	Int	Wis	Dex	Con	Cha	AC	Hp	Area Found	Notes
Tavern Keep (C5)	41	M	15	9	16	9	15	8	10 (4)	19	9, 2, 13, 11	chain mail, shield, club, mace, spells*
Wife	38	F	12	15	7	6	12	17	10	4	13, 12, 14	dagger
Son 1 (I3)	22	M	14	15	15	17	10	13	7	7	12, 11, 9, 2	dagger, spells*
Son 2 (F3)	17	M	18/89	11	10	16	11	15	8 (2)	13	12, 11, 9, 2	chain mail, shield, spear, long sword, light crossbow, dagger
Daughter	18	F	12	13	12	12	14	12	10	3	12, 13, 14	dagger
Liveryman (F5)	37	M	18/01	13	11	12	12	12	10 (3)	24	4, 5, 8	banded mail, shield, battle axe, short sword, light crossbow, dagger
Stable Boy (F1)	15	M	15	10	14	11	12	10	10 (6)	4	4, 5, 3, 8	studded mail, shield, mace, short bow, dagger
Scullion (F1)	16	F	16	12	11	12	9	13	10 (6)	8	10, 3, 15	studded mail, shield, morning star, short bow, dagger
Cook (T5)	32	F	10	12	12	16	14	13	8 (6)	20	10,15	leather, short sword, dagger
Wench 1 (F2/T3)	34	37(½)	15	9	16	12	11	12	8 (5)	9	9, 10	leather armor, shield, spear, long sword, dagger, light crossbow
Wench 2 (C2)	20	F	11	11	16	12	11	12	10 (5)	7	9, 10	chain mail, flail, club, spells *
Wench 3 (F2)	18	F	17	12	12	9	7	13	10 (4)	11	9, 10	chain mail, shield, broad sword, morning star, dagger, short bow
Wench 4 (F2)	22	F	13	13	13	11	15	8	10 (6)	13	9, 10	studded armor, shield, spear, short sword, dagger, sling
Barkeep (C2)	20	M	9	13	15	12	14	14	10 (6)	13	9	studded armor, shield, mace, club
Bouncer 1 (F3)	23	F	16	11	12	10	11	14	10 (5)	24	9	chain mail, bardiche, light crossbow, dagger, club
Bouncer 2 (F3/ MU3)	56	F	15	15	14	12	16	9	10 (6)	18	9	Half-elf; ring mail, shield, spear, long sword, dagger, short bow, spells*
Guest 1	21	M	9	9	9	9	14	16	7	3	1,2,9	ring mail, shield, spear, dagger
"Guest" 2 MU2	24	F	14	15	13	14	15	14	10	5	1, 2, 9	staff, spells*

Tavern Bill of Fare

Menu

Bacon	1 sp
Boiled Cabbage	1 sp
Boiled Turnips	1 sp
Bread (small Loaf)	1 sp
Cake (1 small)	8 cp
Cheese (small round)	3 sp
Fried Trout	10 sp
Grilled Leeks	5 cp
Gruel (bowl)	6 cp
Lentil Soup	8 cp
Pie (whole)	1 gp
Pie, Fruit (Slice)	1 sp
Pie, Meat (Slice)	2 sp
Poached Egg (ea.)	4 cp
Pudding	1 sp
Pulled Pork	3 sp
Roast Chicken	3 sp
Roast pork	5 sp
Roast Potatoes	3 sp
Sausage	2 sp
Stew, Bowl	3 sp
Venison Joint	1 gp
Standard rations (1 week)	4 gp
Iron Rations (1 week)	7 gp

Rates

Common Room	10sp/ night
Guest Room	2gp/night
Hayloft/ yard	3sp/night
Stabling	5sp/night
Repairs	varies

Drink

Ale (pint)	12 sp
Ale (small)	9 sp
Beer (pint)	10 sp
Beer (small)	6 sp
Beer (breakfast)	3 sp
Brandy (glass)	1 gp
Dwarven Gul (shot) (mushroom whiskey)	1 gp
Grog (mug)	8 sp
Mead (mug)	15 sp
Milk (glass)	5 cp
Orcan Gark (mug) (fermented yak milk)	15 sp
Orcan Mulgvis (mug) (ginseng beer)	7 sp
Porter (mug)	15 sp
Rum (shot)	10 sp
Whiskey (shot)	10 sp
Wine (common, carafe)	1 gp
Wine (elven, glass)	3 gp
Wine (fine, carafe)	2 gp
Wine (mulled, glass)	15 sp
Wine (watered, carafe)	10 sp

Ring of Alignment Projection

This ring disguises the perceived alignment of the wearer. Each ring is set to project one alignment, and all tests, magical and mundane, that detect alignment will indicate the character is the alignment projected by the ring. This is proof against all detection magic short of a full *Wish*. However, this ring does not grant the wearer any special abilities of the alignment, including knowledge of alignment language.

There is an equal chance that a found ring will project any of the nine alignments. **Note:** 1% of these rings are faulty, so the projected alignment changes randomly every 1d4 days.

GP value 12,000; XP value 800 *by Bryan Fazekas*

A Fighter, Magic-User, & Cleric Walk Into A Bar ...

by Dan Rasaiah

Welcome weary travelers! Warm yourselves by the hearth and dry out those wet cloaks and boots. We've got hot beef stew, freshly baked bread, and the finest ale this side of the Dragon Reaches. The red minstrels begin play at sundown, so prepare for a night of good food, drink, and raucous merriment!

Inns, taverns, and waystations are an oft used fantasy trope, and can be found at the heart of fantasy literature and role-playing games alike. Beloved examples such as:

- The Inn of the Welcome Wench
- The Traveler's Inn
- The Inn of the Prancing Pony
- The Inn of the Last Home

and countless others, are often the genesis point for epic sagas, and play a significant role in furthering story arcs or serve as a backdrop for the meeting of characters and quests. Even ancient epics such as Beowulf utilise this powerful method, as Hrothgar's mead hall could indeed be one of the first examples of a 'tavern-esque' backdrop for a fantasy adventure.

Whilst synonymous with the fantasy genre, this 'plot tool' is so effective that we often see it displayed in other genres, as *Chalmun's Cantina* (sometimes known as the *Mos Eisley Cantina*) from *Star Wars* fame and *Quark's Bar* from *Deep Space Nine* amply demonstrate.

Home is where the heart is ...

So what is it exactly that makes inns and taverns such a pivotal part of the role-playing experience? There are several factors involved here. The first is that inns fill the role of home for adventurers. Adventure, by its very nature, often involves travel, and fantasy adventurers are wanderers for most of their careers (before/if they attain high levels and build or conquer their own strongholds). So the inn is a place of sanctuary or respite between harrowing quests where death and destruction lurk at every turn. It is a place where adventurers can recoup and convalesce (scroll of town portal anyone?) where they can hole up whilst training or sequester items of plunder (often to their detriment!). In short, it is home.

Now that doesn't mean that the same inn or tavern is always home for a group of adventurers, just that one particular tavern (even if it's the tenth they've stayed in during the past month) usually constitutes Home at that particular time. However, in campaigns where players remain in the same geographic area, a particular inn or tavern may indeed be a surrogate home, as it's the same place the party returns to after each phase of adventure. Adventuring is a dangerous pastime, and PCs don't always get to live it up -- undoubtedly there will be long stints when adventurers are sleeping under the stars in the deep wilderness or underground in some ancient dungeon or catacombs, but there will usually come a time when players grow sick of wandering monsters and constant peril, and temporarily seek safer pastures for their beloved characters.

Melting Pot ...

The second and probably most obvious factor why inns are so integral to role-playing games is that inns and taverns are places of congregation for many varied types of people, and hence are easy and uncontrived sources of plot development. Regardless of the prevailing culture or milieu, almost all villages and cities that the PCs find themselves in will have some sort of 'watering hole' or place of accommodation, and hence the use of the inn or tavern as a means to introduce new NPCs or quests is an easily portable one.

This plot tool is both realistic (within the bounds of the game, that is) and robust, and isn't restricted to just the DM's usage. Players themselves, particularly experienced ones, will use inns and taverns as a means to gather information and intelligence. The first thing that many adventuring parties will do when they arrive in a new town is find an appropriate inn or tavern, and then start asking questions of the innkeeper or patrons.

As an adjunct to this, experienced players will use inns and taverns as a one-stop recruitment shop. Just lost the

party thief to a particularly diabolical trap? No problem, let's hit a tavern in the shady part of town and see if we can find a replacement! Some large cities may have guilds where recruitment of professionals is easily undertaken, but in smaller towns or villages, or in cases where the PCs wish to remain covert, inns and taverns normally assume the role of recruitment centers for adventuring parties. For similar reasons, taverns often serve as employment centers for new or out of work PCs. Just rolled up a new party and looking for a taste of adventure? I hear that caravan drivers are recruiting mercenaries down at the Blue Salamander Inn.

Inns are symbolic ...

The third and perhaps more abstruse reason why inns and taverns are so ubiquitous with role-playing games is that they assume the role of the faceless masses. In effect, the inn is the ultimate NPC as it represents the common man of the particular town or area the PCs are in. In a typical country village, the local tavern will reflect the alignment and 'salt of the earth' qualities of the locals. Conversely, in a degenerate area or town of ill repute, the local tavern will also often be a corrupt and dangerous place.

The most obvious example of this is *The Waterside Hostel* in the village of Nulb from *T1 The Temple of Elemental Evil* fame. In this instance the villagers of Nulb are described as being of Neutral Evil alignment, and 'The Waterside Hostel' is described as a 'scurvy place' where 'rich guests have been known to disappear mysteriously'. With the Inn taking the place of an NPC, the DM is easily able to accurately depict the local area, and the players are able to easily discern what Nulb is all about: a dangerous place where they had better keep their wits about them and their weapons at hand.

Continuing in this vein, in the archetypical game, where the PCs are the good guys and they are carrying out benevolent quests, the inn is often the representation of the town or village which they are looking to help or liberate. Upon the quest's successful completion, the inn is often the backdrop for speeches and celebration, the meeting point for the whole town. Naturally there will be cases where the PCs are themselves evil, or are undertaking quests for purely selfish motives, but in the majority of games, the PCs are seeking to right some wrong or injustice and the inn is often the focal point of those that are being liberated. In effect, the inn itself is being liberated.

Time to Throw down!

The fourth factor why inns and taverns are so integral to role-playing games is that they themselves are easily turned into an adventure. Whether it be the setting for a murder mystery, a death trap that the PCs must escape from, or just a place where dangerous people congregate, inns and taverns always have the potential to be the catalyst for quick and easy action. The most illustrative example of this comes from a different genre: Cowboy and Westerns.

How often is the saloon the stage for some gambling slight or tough guy moment, which ends up with a gunfight or duel in the street seconds after? Geez, even young Skywalker can't buy a drink without someone getting their arm cut off! Similarly a fantasy inn can easily be a place where a shoulder bump leads to a sword fight which leads to a greater quest, or just a helluva brouhaha which fills in some time before the pizza arrives. Nor is this setting for adventure limited to violence: role-playing games are just that, games where players can play roles, and what better setting for some amateur character acting than one where PCs can get raucously drunk and boisterous! I'd be surprised if any gaming group didn't have at least one instance of a character getting hammered or just a bit overly amorous with the clientele. Shooting down PCs' drunken attempts to pick up 'chicks in the bar' has always been an enjoyable side perk for this DM let me tell you!

Inns, taverns, and waystations have always been at the forefront of fantasy gaming. I encourage all DMs to grab their copy of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and flip to page 193. David Trampier's famous drawing encapsulates many things integral to *AD&D*. Fear, villainy, magic, swordplay, impending heroism, and at the forefront of the picture, the Green Griffon inn. So take a moment to reflect on that ever-present but sometimes unheralded facet of the fantasy roleplaying experience, the local tavern. In some way shape or other, I'll wager that inns, taverns, and waystations have been as much a part of your gaming experience as they have been of mine. So raise a glass and toast that shadowy NPC at the table, here's to the humble inn!

Elixir of Aging Gracefully

This magical elixir temporarily suspends aging (rather than reverses it), and unlike the **Potion of Longevity** it has no chance of failing catastrophically. However, it is limited, and with each subsequent **Elixir of Aging Gracefully** consumed, the efficacy is decreased.

After consuming a dose of the elixir, the affected individual will cease to age for 1d12+2 years. Each subsequent dose will be reduced in efficacy by 2 years (i.e. the 2nd such dose will only suspend aging for 2d6 years, the 3rd dose for 2d6-2 years, and so on). Once a zero or negative value is realized, no benefit will ever again be realized from this elixir, although the extra years will not be nullified.

As the magic is subtle, no system shock roll is required.

One should be warned, while there is no chance of a catastrophic failure from the consumption of this elixir, mixing elixirs and **Potion of Longevity** carries risks. The number of **Elixirs of Aging Gracefully** consumed count towards the "cumulative" **Potions of Longevity** consumed when a percentile roll is made to see if the benefits of a **Potion of Longevity** are stripped away.

GP value 2,000; XP value 600

by Andrew Hamilton

Faerie Society

by Andrew Hamilton

Note: *As noted in the first article of this series, I owe a debt of inspiration to Jon Turcotte, whose adventure Red Tam's Bones (available on Dragonsfoot) inspired much of my take on "the Otherworld", including ripping the name off. I'm also influenced by* The Never Never *in the* Dresden File *novels (by Jim Butcher). I'm sure that there are a lot of other subtle or forgotten influences that have wormed their way into my psyche, so please excuse my failure to recognize and credit those.*

The Faerie Realm is commonly referred to as "The Otherworld", although mortals have many names for it. These include the Seelie Courts, the Unseelie Courts, The Fae, The Never-Never, The Court of Light & Darkness, and perhaps even more. Some authorities are quick to point out that mortals describe each of these "places" slightly differently, and argue that there is more than one Faerie Realm. Others dismiss that, saying that there is but one Realm, and these are merely "nations" within that Realm. The most reliable mortal sources (typically those elves and druids that have spent time in the Otherworld) will shrug and ask how one can truly understand, let alone categorize, a magical realm that responds to the imagination and whims of its masters. Like all things fae, mortals really don't and can't fully comprehend the intricacies of the Otherworld (which gives the DM licence to modify, be inconsistent, and mangle the setting all in the name of providing a fun game!).

1) The Hierarchy

The Faerie Hierarchy separates faerie-kind into two categories, the lesser faeries (pixies, sprites, grigs, atomies, etc.) and the Greater Faeries. Greater Faeries occupy a position of power above the lesser faerie-kind, although this position should not be interpreted as meaning Greater Faeries have authority over lesser faeries. The lesser faeries are chaotic, undisciplined, and unlikely to bow to the will of a Greater Faerie unless the lesser faerie is in the presence of the Greater Faerie (and even in this situation compliance is unlikely unless the lesser faerie is in danger and unable to flee).

The false fae (as described in *& Magazine* issue 10) and mortals are not considered to have any place in faerie society, even those false fae and mortals that are native to or reside in the Otherworld. These entities and creatures may be tolerated by the Greater Fae, or even treated as companions and allies, but they will be seen as second class citizens, and will never, ever be admitted into the inner workings of Greater Fae society.

The Greater Fae are comprised of four classes:

- Common Fae
- Knights
- Lesser Nobles
- Nobles

Common Fae. In the ranks of Greater Faeries, the Common Fae is the least powerful of the Greater Faerie hierarchy. Common Fae make up more than 90% of the population of Greater Faeries. These entities have chosen to retain their independence, and have sworn no *Oath of Service and Loyalty* to a noble. They may ally with or support a noble, or not, depending on the situation and whim of the Common Fae. Common fae tend to be willfully independent, stubborn, and notoriously hard to control or compel. Even a Common Fae that is dedicated to a cause will oscillate between being incredibly focused on the cause or task, then becoming entranced by something else and wandering off. Mortals should be warned however, just because a Common Fae behaves somewhat chaotically, and seems to have lost interest in a subject or undertaking, does not mean that the Fae has actually forgotten it. They think in long time frames, and non-linear fashion, and can keep multiple complex schemes and machinations progressing over periods of decades.

Knights (5% to 6% of the Greater Faerie population) have sworn an *Oath of Service and Loyalty* to a noble, and serve as his/her agent. Knights may or may not have a domain or demesne, depending on whether their Lord has granted lands to them (approximately half of Knights receive a demesne from their Lord). These domains tend to be small, a square mile or three in size, maybe up to five square miles for the most powerful and loyal Knights. Knights have no followers, other than those base mortal creatures, lesser faeries and desperate Common Fae (if such unruly creatures can be forced or tricked into service) that the Knight or his Lord-Master has been able to press into service.

Lesser Nobles (less than 2% of the Greater Faerie population) may be Knights that have gathered power and taken a step towards the rank of Noble (or are Nobles that are slowly falling from grace and seeing their power erode). Other Lesser Nobles seem to appear "fully empowered", although all Noble Fae are fond of misdirection and take pride in distorting the true source of their powers and origins. Lesser Nobles all have a domain or demesne, typically 10 to 20 square miles in size, sometimes as large as 100 square miles. Most have followers (a few Knights, and possibly other creatures) as well, although the Lesser Nobles never fully trust their "loyal" followers.

Nobles (less than 1% of the Greater Faerie population) stand atop the Greater Faerie hierarchy, with large domains & demesnes (at least 100 square miles, but often much larger) under their control. They all have followers – a handful to a dozen Knights, with the more powerful Nobles being served by a few Lesser Nobles as well. Nobles also take great pride in using trickery or misdirection to gain the service of powerful Mortals, such as adventurers. Nobles command great magical powers within the bounds of their domains, and are reluctant to leave their demesnes as a result of the temporary reduction of their personal power.

There is significant rivalry and jockeying for position and power between Nobles, as they control greater domains, attract more vassals, and (most importantly) embarrass or weaken their rival Nobles. The vassals and allies of a Noble are often the target of a rival Noble's schemes or machinations. In general, outright assassination, murder, duels, and warfare is considered to be gauche and beneath Greater Faeries. However, leading someone (like a PC) around in verbal circles and then sending them off to wreak physical mayhem in a rival's territory is considered to be an excellent use of mortals and well within the confines of "civilized play". The trick is to convince someone to undertake an action of their own free will; it is this trickery aspect that prevents Greater Faeries, and in particular faerie Nobles, from charming or summoning monsters and setting them loose on rivals. Such a brute-force approach will set tongues wagging for all the wrong reasons.

1.1) True Nobles

These powerful entities are even more powerful than the Faerie Nobles, possibly equal in power to demigods. They are unpredictable, and they defy simple description. Each is unique. Some have vassals, others don't. Some claim dominions, others do not. Some are interested in Mortals, others ignore them. Some of the True Nobles even deign to involve themselves in the politicking and schemes of Greater Fae.

The number of True Nobles, how and if they are related, how they achieved their rank, etc. is subject to a great deal of conjecture. The line between the weakest of the True Nobles and the most powerful of the Noble Faeries is very fine, and in some cases the most powerful Nobles have magical or physical might that exceeds that of a True Noble. In all cases however, Greater Fae treat True Nobles with respect (even if or as they plot against them).

It should be noted that there is no shortage of Lesser and Noble Faeries that would love to know how True Nobles attained their rank. Such knowledge would allow a Lesser or Greater Noble to replicate the process and become a "god".

The Seelie & Unseelie Courts

Given my huge amount of notes, ideas and concepts, and my equally poor recordkeeping & organizational abilities, my campaign has multiple versions of each of these Courts in the Otherworld; and as much as there is a Seelie/Unseelie rivalry, there is also intense rivalry between the various Seelie Courts. Why doesn't it bother me that I have more than one version of each Court? I see the Otherworld as a place full of willful, unorganized and chaotic individuals that are unlikely to bow to a single master, and are quite willing to steal someone else's idea and put their own twist on it. Hence, anyone can become a King or Queen of a Seelie Court, if they have the power and personality to round up a few subjects. Plus it drives players a little crazy when they realize that there really isn't a single authority or hierarchy in the Otherworld, and just about anything they encounter could be a King or Queen, with a bunch of retainers.

1.2) The Oath of Service

Every Faerie Knight and Lesser Noble must swear an *Oath of Service and Loyalty* to a more powerful Faerie Noble (a Knight may swear their oath to a Lesser Noble or a Noble, and a Lesser Noble will swear their oath to a Noble). A Faerie Noble may swear an oath to a True Noble, although this is rare as most Faerie Nobles are "independent", preferring to owe no fealty to a higher power.

The Oath is binding, but with it comes power. A Common Faerie who swears an *Oath of Service and Loyalty*

to a Lesser Noble or Noble becomes a Knight, and gains magical abilities, durability and heightened physical capability. What is less clear is what the Oath bequeathed gains.

The gathering of vassals seems to be associated with an increase in a Faerie Noble's power, although it is unclear as to which comes first, the gathering of vassals or the increase in power. Certainly, having relatively loyal vassals is advantageous. In the chaotic and mercurial hierarchy of the Greater Fae, there is some standing of seniority associated with holding a larger demesne and having a greater number of vassals.

It is unclear as to how an independent Faerie Noble gains their power without a bond between themselves and a more powerful entity. There is speculation that a Lesser Noble may advance to the position of Noble through the death of their patron. Some refute this, pointing out that this would seemingly result in the elevation of several Lesser Nobles simultaneously. Others instead maintain that the Noble must die at the hands of the Lesser Noble, or that upon the death of a Noble, the Lesser Noble must somehow "harvest" power distributed to the now deceased Lord's other vassals (which might result in a murderous spree of faericide). There are tales of True Nobles granting a Noble vassal freedom, allowing the Oath to be set aside. The truth, as is always the case in the Otherworld, remains unclear. It is likely that speculation as to the origins of Noble's power, or stories shared, will be of some benefit to the speculator (perhaps attempting to foment dissent within the ranks of a rival's vassals).

Temporarily ignoring the question of how Greater Faeries reproduce (and one should not expect an answer to this question, for while Greater Fae enjoy dallying with each other, as well as suitably attractive mortals or other sentient creatures, the birth of a "child" never seems to occur and Greater Fae prefer to keep such matters private) noble rank does not seem to be hereditary, although the sons & daughters of Nobles seem more likely to join the ranks of the faerie Nobility. Part nepotism, and part relying on a familial bond of loyalty (which can be shaky at best), Faerie Nobles have no compunction receiving an *Oath of Service and Loyalty* from their offspring.

The death of a Noble typically (5 in 6) results in the loss of a vassal's power. The power is lost in the reverse order that it is gained (see the Side Bar – Gaining Power). The erosion of power can be halted by finding another Faerie Noble willing to accept an *Oath of Service and Loyalty*. In the event that the vassal does not lose their "power", they become a free agent and a temporary wild card in the Greater Fae hierarchy. Such a Knight-Errant or Oathless Noble will be sought after as an ally or pawn in various schemes, or seen as a threat.

As can be inferred from the power that a vassal receives, the Oath is more than mere empty words. It is a bond, a bond that allows the vassal to draw power, but also a bond that allows a Noble to compel a vassal to action. Any instructions that a Noble gives to a vassal must be followed TO THE LETTER (which of course inspires a lot of linguistic acrobatics on the part of vassals), with one exception. A Noble cannot give vassals instruction to kill themselves -- such instructions would "break the Oath", setting the vassal free but retaining their power. However, a Noble can instruct a vassal to engage in a suicidal undertaking.

I Want To Play A Half-Fae!

No. Nope. There are no half-fae. While the Greater Fae and Mortals are (generally) physically compatible, they are not cross fertile.

If a player is absolutely desperate to go down this road, and you can't be bothered to find a new player, then consider the half-satyr and half-dryad presented in "Hooves and Green Hair" by Bennet Marks in Dragon Magazine issue 109.

Gaining Power

With an oath comes power, but it isn't quite as simple as swearing the oath and walking away with a few extra magical abilities and hit dice. The power is gained slowly, over the course of several years (which isn't all that long for an immortal creature).

Immediately	+1 HD, -1 AC bonus
1 month	1st magical power
6 months	remaining HD
12 months	remaining AC bonuses and physical attribute increases
2 years	remaining magical powers

However, should a Greater Faerie find themselves in a position where they have yet to fully acquire all of the powers associated with a rank, and they acquire another rank, e.g. a young Knight, only having sworn her oath 6 months previous, suddenly finds herself elevated to the rank of Lesser Noble, all of their "lesser" powers suddenly and painfully manifest and they begin to slowly acquire their new rank abilities.

2) Deities

Greater Faeries worship no deities, and there are no Greater Faerie clerics. Some entities with powers equivalent to Lesser and Greater Gods may be found in the Otherworld, including the Queens of the Seelie Courts. Many of the "courtiers" and "visiting nobles and ambassadors" in the various Seelie Courts are likely to be Greater Fae.

Opinion differs as to whether True Nobles are deities, demi-gods, or something else. Certainly these entities, the pinnacle of the Greater Faerie hierarchy, possess immense powers, particularly within the confines of their own demesne or Realm. Some put them on an equivalent ranking of power with Demon Lords, Arch-Devils, and similar entities, and ascribe to the True Nobles the powers and capabilities of Demigods or Lesser Gods.

At least one hierophant druid familiar with the Otherworld has suggested that the True Nobles are not actually divinities, basing his theory on the fact that he has observed many True Nobles deceiving various groups of mortals into believing that the True Noble was in fact a god. In no case the hierophant was aware of did any of the worshippers gain clerical powers. However, the hierophant is careful to point out that there seem to be no absolutes when dealing with any of the Greater Fae, so he may in fact be wrong.

Divine Or Not

It is up to the DM to whether a True Noble is a deific entity. Providing a True Noble with the abilities of a Lesser God will make them a foe to be reckoned with. It will also make it more likely for True Nobles to meddle in the Mortal Realm, where their physical form may be destroyed but they are not subject to "true" death.

Even if a True Noble is a deity, they are extremely unlikely to accept human worshippers and grant them clerical ability and spells--unless founding such a "cult" is part of some type of scheme that the True Noble is engaged in. In this case, the mortal worshippers are likely to be discarded once their utility has ended. The Greater Fae are simply too flighty to watch over a large body of worshippers.

Summon Faerie

There is no *Summon Faerie* spell, although the *Monster Summoning* spells could be adapted to summon a Greater Faerie if (and only if) the caster knows a True Name. In this case a *Monster Summoning IV* could be adapted to summon a Common Greater Faerie, and each higher hierarchy of Faerie would require a more powerful spell (culminating in a *Monster Summoning VII* spell adapted to summon a Noble Faerie). No True Noble faerie can be summoned against their will. Ever. Making the attempt should be the start of very bad things for the aspiring summoner.

3) Summoning Faeries & True Names

Faeries cannot normally be summoned in the manner that elementals, demons, devils or other extra-planar entities are. However, there are two cases where a Greater Faerie can be "summoned".

First, should a mortal speak the name of a Faerie Knight, Lesser Noble or Noble at the appropriate location, the Faerie will "hear" and may choose to cross to the Mortal Realm from the Otherworld. The Common Fae lack this ability.

This "appropriate location" is often a Way that connects with the Faerie's demesne, and it allows the Faerie to arrive and treat with mortal servants, etc. It also serves to alert the Noble that someone is at the Way, and nearing the Noble's demesne (which is why the "perfect" activation key for a Way would be to speak the Noble's name, and they often will tell mortals something like "To activate the Way to my demesne one should spin in three circles with a rose in the right hand and thistle in the left. Speak my name as you do so." And note how the Noble has provided a factual comment about activating the way, and separately provided an instruction that is separate from the activation command, yet the two actions seem related. Tricky!. There is absolutely no compulsion for the Faerie Noble to appear in this case.

In the second case, should a mortal magic-user (or witch, or other spell caster) manage to learn the Greater Faerie's True Name (which is both a closely guarded secret and rarely even known by the Greater Faerie themselves) they may combine that True Name with the appropriate spell (see sidebar) and summon the Faerie. In this case the Faerie is forced to appear, but is not under the control of the caster. Similarly, a Greater Faerie is not constrained by magic circles, pentagrams, etc. In a case like this, the Faerie will seek to leave immediately. Not fight, not talk - just depart. Then they will begin planning how to restore

some secrecy to their True Name (while rival faeries will likely begin seeking knowledge of the True Name).

4) Thou Shalt Not Lie (but Deception is Okay)

The Greater Faerie do not lie. Ever. It is both one of their greatest laws, and an integral, primal element of their being. It may actually be that a Greater Faerie cannot lie, even if they wanted to. There are two important things to note about the faerie restriction to always tell the truth.

First, Greater Faeries are different than the lesser faerie and faerie-kin. Creatures such as pixies, sprites, buckawns, grigs and so on can freely lie; they often do so for their own purposes or in service of some other entity. Greater Faeries are quite comfortable allowing another creature to lie on their behalf. The Greater Fae can even tell another creature to lie, since these instructions are factual and not a lie.

Second, an inability to lie is significantly different than an inability to deceive. Faeries are accomplished deceivers, using half-truths, vagaries, silence, speculation and very precise wording to twist listeners in knots. Even the dimmest Faerie makes the most accomplished politician seem clumsy. Speaking in vagaries and innuendo, avoiding certainty, etc. is so ingrained in faerie-kind that they find it almost painful to speak plainly and to the point, even to those they trust.

Notes for play - faerie tend to ask lots of questions, use a lot of pronouns, and make vague comments. They could use comments and phrases like:

i) Some might think (some might, but the faerie may not be included in this number, and think is far different than "know")

ii) It could seem (it could, and seem is very vague)

iii) What do you think (followed by "interesting", "possibly", etc. in an effort to lead the questioned into believing the faerie agrees with them).

iv) It seems likely that (again, another phrase that does not reveal what the speaker's opinion is; it is merely a comment as to how a situation might appear. This phrase can be particularly useful followed by a few select observations to paint a picture favorable to the Faerie. Remember, omission is not a lie.)

v) They have been known to .... (using someone's past actions to implicate them).

True Names

At this point someone is probably asking "what exactly is a True Name, and if I know one what does it mean?" Here's my take on the "True Name".

Creatures of magic or other primordial force (such as elementals in my campaigns) have a name which describes their unique essence and connection to some fundamental force of their reality. In many ways this name is a "formula" that describes the connection or encasement of that primordial energy in a tangible form. This formula is almost like a spell in that it allows the speaker to exert some control over that primordial energy, e.g. the magical or supernatural entity in question.

I see elementals (including genies), demons (representing chaos), devils & daemons (representing evil), and Greater Fae as having "True Names". I don't consider anything mortal, partially mortal (alu-demons, cambions) or previously mortal (shades, undead) to have a True Name.

Despite the inability to lie, faeries suffer no restrictions on the use of illusions, with one exception. A faerie may not have an illusion with an auditory element blatantly lie. The illusion itself is not seen as a lie because it is not "real". While this is a glaring philosophical inconsistency that has baffled many sages, it is the way it is.

When dealing with faeries, one should take a lesson from faerie nobility and how they deal with their vassals. Always ask a question with a "yes or no" answer, and even then expect to have to ask the question more than once in different ways.

5) Deal Making & Reciprocity

Faerie society is all about keeping score, and attempting to get someone in your debt. Mortals must remember that nothing offered by a Greater Faerie is ever free (unless the Greater Faerie very plainly states that "I freely offer you this", and beware of the "and take this too" part). Never, ever accept something from a Greater Faerie without agreeing to the price.

This can get quite complicated, as a mortal offering something to a faerie can expect to be repaid. Payment rarely reflects the value of the item or service received, but also rarely varies too far from the value of the item or

service, as Greater Fae are concerned about their reputation for honoring a debt, and walk the fine line of honoring the debt while also making sure that they best the Mortal to whom they are obliged. A wise mortal attempts to settle the debt at the time the deal is made, or at least agree upon the repayment terms (I will kill the troll Gringeworst and re-open the Risingwood Way ...), or even makes payment at the time (in currency such as gold, lore, spells, or an item).

Typically a faerie will seek to have a debt paid back in service, which could be as simple as "guard this place", "steal this item", "deliver this message", etc. Some debts are complicated and approach the Oath of Service in complexity, such as a multi-generational agreement where the mortals guard a Way, and the Faerie blesses each child with health & beauty, or magical ability. Other debts may be paid back through a term of service as a servant or companion (even sometimes a requirement for a child to serve in the Otherworld, the source of many tales and legends). Some debts include trading magical items or lore.

Should a mortal or a faerie end up owing a faerie a favor, the recipient of the favor may enforce the favor and/or trade the favor to another faerie. This holds for Mortals, who can "trade" the favor away, or pass a "favor" on through the generations. Of course, a faerie can attempt to enforce such a debt on a child or grandchild of the Mortal who owed the Faerie a debt.

Enforcing the debt is done as if a *Geas* (as per the 6th level magic-user spell) is in place. If the favor was granted freely and willingly, e.g., It was not charmed or tortured out of the grantor - although a grantor feeling like they have no other option and grant the favor grudgingly is still acting of their own free will, there is no save vs. the *Geas* nor will magic resistance be of any benefit. Dying will not negate the favor owed however, so a PC who dies and is raised remains in debt; or the debt may have been passed on to their kin. If the favor was coerced or granted unknowingly, then a save vs. Spells may allow the *Geas*-like effects to be overcome. Having a favor "defeated" in this manner is a great loss of face for a Greater Fae.

Note that a Mortal cannot similarly compel a faerie who owes them a favor. In this case, trading the favor might be in the Mortal's best interest (as a Greater Fae receiving such a favor could enforce it). In fact, the mere threat of trading a debt to another faerie might be enough to extract a deal from a Greater Fae.

Favors are the most valued of faerie currency. As such, favors are traded back and forth between faeries (and many seek to gain a position of advantage over a rival by acquiring a favor from their enemy). These favors are almost never discharged, as a rival prefers to allow the threat of calling in the favor to loom over a rival's head.

'Commensuricity'

The action that discharges a favor must be commensurate with the action (gift, etc.) that earned the favor. Thus a small favor gained by providing directions could be returned by providing directions or some similar information, carrying a message, etc. A favor earned by saving someone's life could be used to have someone act as a bodyguard. A Faerie will always seek to underpay "just a little" to feel that they got the better end of the bargain.

Small Favor – offering food or water, directions, shelter, or even helping carry a load. This might be repaid with a meal or drink, a warning, or a temporary blessing.

Favor – a combination of small favors, such as providing food, shelter and dry clothing on a stormy night, aiding someone at some small risk to one's self (pulling someone from a swift river, chasing off a predator), or a day's labor of assistance. Such a favor may be paid back with minor magical assistance in the future, an augury or foretelling, good luck or a similar treatment to that which earned the favor.

Large Favor – saving one's life, aiding them in a battle against a powerful foe, sharing a piece of magical lore or a spell with them, helping deceive a rival and gain social standing, protecting a Way. These favors are typically paid back with magic, be it magical intervention in the future, some unique magical knowledge or even a magical item (often temporary).

Great Favor – an action that preserves or expands a demesne, rescues a Fae from imprisonment or certain death at risk to the Mortal.

6) Faerie Leisure

Faeries spend their time engaging in merriment, and they love feasting, dancing, and music. Some of the more martial also enjoy hunting -- there is no shortage of challenging prey in the Otherworld, and hunting, for example a giant stag, with 5+5 HD, able to dimension door and alter self, or a giant boar that can grow in size to something like a small cottage and whose skin turns away arrows and boar spears – is no easy task. Some also enjoy crafting beautiful items, or wandering and seeing

the sights (also known as spying on rivals, neighbors and allies). Greater Fae are likely to have a large number of interests, which they pick up, pursue and abandon, only to pick them up again. Such is the existence of an immortal, chaotic entity.

Not surprisingly, scheming takes up an awful lot of Faerie time as well, and any Faerie worthy of the name loves the chance to engage in practical jokes (against anyone and everyone, especially Mortals and rivals). It is this aspect of Faerie personality that makes a Greater Fae an entertaining villain, with a wide range of magical powers, and a level of irresponsibility and sense of humor that would make a 6-year-old proud. They would rather humiliate their Mortal foes than kill them, especially if the humiliation can somehow be public.

7) Mortals in the Otherworld

Mortals don't belong in the Otherworld, although they can make their way into the realm through any number of Ways, magical transport or spells, or even be carried across the Veil by a Noble. Once a mortal arrives in the Otherworld, the news will very quickly spread amongst the common faeries, eventually making its way to a Greater Fae. That Greater Faerie will investigate, hoping to beat his or her rivals to the scene, as mortals make such good targets of practical jokes, dupes and tools. It is not uncommon for mortals to find themselves propositioned by several Greater Fae, perhaps invited by a Knight to a banquet or gala at her Lord's demesne, while another offers a secluded place to rest, safe from "all of these annoying pixies".

Whether accompanied by a Greater Faerie or not, mortals will find themselves constantly being "pranked" by common faeries of all types. These pranks can be as simple as making PCs trip, have a belt open & pants fall down, hair grow everywhere, etc. (and for the record, a quick flip through the magic-user & illusionist cantrips in *Unearthed Arcana* should provide a DM with plenty of ammunition for the prank-a-thon the faeries will wage on mortals). These pranks are often the kind of thing that a 6-year-old would find hilarious.

Evil faeries will find pranks that harm the victims, or terrify them, of the most interest. These include having a cloak catch on fire, heating water so that it burns, putting acidic dust on something that will transfer to the eyes (blinding a PC), etc. Neutral faeries are less likely to actively seek to harm mortals, and good aligned faeries avoid directly harming mortals (although unintended consequences are surprisingly common).

When it comes to pranks, Greater Fae pride themselves as being more sophisticated ... while secretly finding the juvenile antics of the lesser faeries to be hilarious. They may spend weeks setting up the perfect prank.

Faeries of all types are vaguely aware that some mortals are deadly, but seemingly proceed from the base assumption that whatever mortal they are currently dealing with is weak. Once (and if) disabused of this notion, Greater Fae start thinking about how to manipulate those mortals, while lesser faeries hide. Until then, the mortals are seen as dim-witted playthings, something new to break up the tedium of immortality.

Mortal magic-users and illusionists often have magical knowledge that Greater Faeries do not have (and vice versa), and a powerful spell caster may find themselves a much sought-after guest. Clerics are treated with caution; the strange powers wielded by these mortal servants of the deities are unpredictable, often ruining a faerie's fun, and often downright dangerous.

It is not uncommon for a mortal to turn the tables on a Greater Faerie (as other Greater Faeries will be secretly aiding the PCs, hindering the Greater Faerie, or just monkeying about in the mix to add a little more unpredictability to the proceedings. In these cases the Greater Faerie is likely to swear some type of everlasting grudge or oath of vengeance against the mortal. Fortunately, the Greater Fae have long memories, but short (often really short) attention spans. Unless some grievous harm was inflicted on the Greater Faerie, mortals that can beard a Faerie (so to speak) in their own demesne and abscond back to the Mortal Realm will likely be safe from any vengeance in a few weeks.

Oil of Slime Resistance

When applied to a person or equipment, this magical oil will prevent the protected item from being corroded or infected by any slime (green or olive), ooze (gray or crystal), pudding, jelly, etc. A container of this oil typically has 1d3 applications; each application can protect a single person for 2d4+1 hours, or a person and their gear for 1d4+1 hours. Applying the oil takes 1d4+2 rounds.

GP value 4,000; XP value 400 *by Andrew Hamilton*

Luck Beyond the Roll

by Thom Wilson

A new game mechanic to try

Attributes in most game systems focus on the core elements of a character, centering on the tangible mechanics of gameplay. Traits, skills and statistics determine how much your adventurer can lift or how accurate they are with a bow. We've all encountered the common attributes in some form: strength, intelligence, dexterity, constitution, and even charisma (to use some of the names from past games). Success with actions, whether mental or physical, can be determined quite simply with a few die rolls and a consultation of the correct chart or table. Are there other aspects of the character that may not be easily seen or measured? Can an adventurer be lucky?

Luck can be a controversial mechanic. There are some players that don't believe luck exists in reality and therefore is irrelevant in gaming. Others, including myself, believe that some form of luck exists and could be applied to gaming in ways beyond simple saving throws. Luck can manifest itself organically through a player's die roll but what about the character's overall "luckiness"? Aren't adventurers more than simple townsfolk because of the risks they take and the heroic feats they attempt? Characters often survive by sheer luck; at times, their wits and muscle aren't enough.

This article attempts to provide some insight into how I use Luck in the *ThrowiGames Simple Roleplaying System* (TSRS, a d6 system), and some ideas on how you may incorporate it into your game.

Luck as an Attribute

A GM can add Luck as an attribute to any game system. The value of a character's Luck can be known to the player or it can be a secret value that the GM manages behind the screen. Either way, this value can provide some interesting options for both the player and GM. The Luck attribute can share the same value range of the other core attributes, i.e. 3-18 in a 3d6 system or 1-100 in a d100 system. In the TSRS the player must allocate 24 total points for seven attributes, including Luck. Allocating fewer points to Luck does provide a bigger pool for the other six attributes, but how does a lower Luck score really affect the adventurer? My players struggle to place points in their Luck attribute because they know I can use it as much as the other six scores.

A simple way to use the Luck attribute is the "roll under" method, a typical mechanic for the simple resolution of actions or events. Rolling under the character's Luck score indicates that it has some bearing on the action. Using the successful luck roll, the GM can add a bonus to a feat or allow a second chance attempt. For example, your thief attempts to unlock a particularly difficult mechanism but fails their roll badly. Does a positive Luck roll provide them a second chance? Does a negative Luck roll break their lock picks?

Luck as an attribute can also be used generically. For example, a character with a high strength is considered "strong" and another adventurer with a high Intelligence is considered "smart". The same approach can be taken with Luck; a character could just be "lucky". I may give a second chance in critical situations to those with a higher Luck score.

Luck as a Chance Pool

Another way to use Luck is to make it a value that players use when they need it. I've allowed the Luck score to be used as a pool of chances that players draw from. With TSRS, the Luck value can range from one to six. The GM may allow players to use their Luck score for second chance attempts or retries of a difficult feat. For example, in TSRS if an adventurer has a Luck score of 3, I'll allow the player three uses per game day or week, or perhaps even gaming session. These three uses can be used to re-roll an attack, retry picking a lock, or any other chance at a failed attempt. Once those three are used, they get no more second chances until the period begins

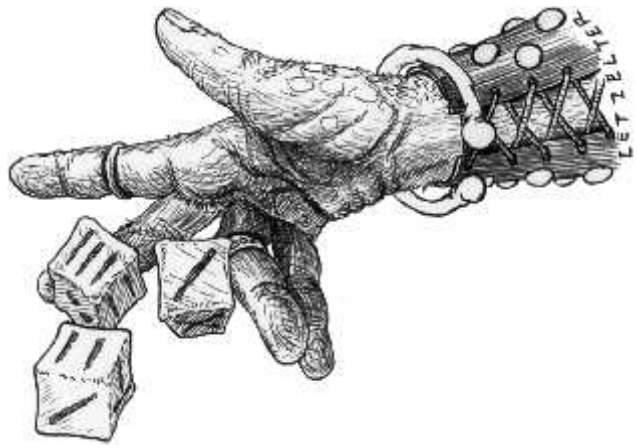
again. Table A0 provides potential values for other systems.

Additionally, I've allowed Luck to be used for outright survival in the worst situations. If the adventurer dies in combat or a tragic fall, I've allowed the Luck score to be permanently reduced by one to prevent death – basically using Luck like a cat would with nine lives. The adventurer is left with just enough hit points or damage points to stay alive. In my system, Luck can never be reduced to zero; once the adventurer has a Luck score of 1, they'll be unable to ward off Death when he comes again.

Table A0

Chances	3d6 System	D100 System
1	3-5	01-25
2	6-9	26-49
3	10-13	50-75
4	14-16	76-90
5	17-18	91-95
6	19+	96+

As an alternative to Luck providing a re-roll as the player chooses, it may serve as a bonus pool. Each "chance" would instead provide a +1 to the desired roll (typically a +5% of success). Chances could be limited to being used one at or time, or combined to try to ensure success.



Examples of Luck in Gameplay

Many of the actions that players take for granted can easily be impacted by a higher or lower Luck score. Of course, I'm not suggesting that the Luck score should be used in everyday, mundane situations. However, I do tend to use Luck checks randomly to keep my players on their toes. For example, many of the archer types assume their arrows are easily found after battle and that they are all unbroken. I'll use a Luck check to see how many are intact and/or found. Luck also plays a role in heroic feats, especially when the action is incredibly difficult or grandiose. Your hero jumps over a table to leap into battle, swinging his battle axe overhead. Perhaps a failed Luck check indicates he trips over the table before getting into the fray.

Table A1 provides several common examples and the results of using Luck in game play. The success and failure results are mere suggestions and can be modified in any way you see fit.

Table A1

Action	Success	Failure
Retrieve arrows after combat	Find all unbroken	Find half unbroken
Failed Poison Save	Allow a second roll	Poison takes effect
Adventurer takes damage in combat	All gear survives battle	1 piece of armor or gear destroyed
Tavern dice game	Reroll bad roll	Keep the bad roll
Tavern card game	Replace a card with better card	Keep the cards
Failed jump of pit	Just able to grab edge	Fall ...
Caught in a dead end alley	Find an unlocked door	Trapped! No way out.
Fumble weapon during combat	Merely lose your grip	Drop weapon, out of reach
Gem appraisal	Highest value or rarest quality	Lowest value or most common rarity

Luck can be applied to virtually any set of actions, and as we've discussed there are a number of ways to add the element of luck.

Table A2

d6 System Luck Score	3d6 System Luck Score	Success Streak	Increase Luck
1	3-5	3	+1
2	6-9	6	+1
3	10-13	9	+1
4	14-16	12	+1
5	17-18	15	+1
6	19+	n/a	n/a

Changing Luck Over Time

I've already described how an adventurer may decrease his Luck with the chance pool option, but can it change in other ways? Can an unlucky individual become luckier, or even less lucky? I generally do not allow the Luck score to change over time but there's something about a character on a "lucky streak" that makes for a good argument for an increase. I've tracked players' Luck rolls (or my secret rolls for them) and have seen a few impressive streaks, especially with those with lower scores. I have allowed for their Luck to increase when this happens. See Table A2 for a method I've used to increase Luck. The success streak goal is harder to achieve with higher Luck scores.

Final Thoughts on Luck

Using Luck in your system is meant to enhance gameplay by offering players and GMs alike an alternate mechanism for event resolution. Obviously, we really don't want to slow any game system down with additional rules and dice rolling. I personally don't overuse Luck because I rarely let the dice dictate the direction of the story. However, I will use it at times when it feels right. Of course, when my playing group decides to challenge the game system by putting a 1 in all of their Luck scores, I tend to use it a bit more. Hopefully, you'll consider using it as well.

Thom Wilson is the author of the ENnie nominated ThrowiGames Simple Roleplaying System (TSRS). His guidelines, accessories and adventures can be downloaded free of charge at http://throwigames.com/.

Hunting Horn

The hunting horn is a well-made, if somewhat plain-looking, horn, clearly the type used by hunters to signal to other hunting parties. This magical item has 2 uses. First, if used outside, it allows its owner to sound a signal that can be heard clearly up to 12 miles away, regardless of weather conditions or terrain. Secondly, it allows its owner (1/day) to locate the nearest large game animal as if they were a 9th level druid casting the 1st level druidic spell *Locate Animals*, with the exception that it is only effective on large game animals like deer, boar, moose, etc.

GP value 2,500; XP value 500

by Andrew Hamilton

Folding Tent

This well made four-person tent is completely waterproof and windproof. The tent anchors itself to the ground when set up, ensuring that it will not be blown away by strong winds. The material is thick, heavy canvas (magically toughened, receiving a +4 bonus to saving throws). The tent does not keep its occupants magically warm or cool however; it merely has the properties of an extremely well made tent. The tent has two magical properties that make it very valuable for travelers. First the tent will set up or tear down upon the utterance of a command word, taking one round. Second, the tent can be folded in on itself over and over, ultimately being packed into a small bundle 12" tall x 6" wide x 3" thick (weighing only 1 lb), a bundle easily placed in a backpack or saddle bag.

GP value 3,500; XP value 1,00

by Andrew Hamilton

Can't Remember The Name, But The Fangs Look Familiar

by the Goblin's Henchman

Author's note: This article has been inspired by the Roll for Initiative (RFI) podcast (Volume 1, Issue 33), where a discussion took place about the possibility of a magic user (MU) being able to recognize an encountered creature simply from the knowledge that they acquired in their arcane studies. If this magic user was a low level magic user who was out of spells, then this recognizing ability might still be of some tactical assistance to the rest of the adventuring party. The author has expanded on this discussion to provide some suggested rules, and has also included other classes (not just MUs), albeit those classes having a lesser ability to recognize encountered creatures. Also, for example rangers and druids would be able to recognize woodland creatures better than some other classes. Of course, a DM might choose to limit the creature spotting ability to magic users only. The author would be interested to hear from anyone who has any comments on this article, and in particular from anyone who uses these rules in their game.

Rules for 'Creature Recognition'

Declaration - A player must declare that they wish their character to spend **at least one round** studying the creature. Characters do not spontaneously recognize a creature without this study time.

In part this rule is a mechanism to prevent the game being slowed down while it is determined if each character 'recognizes' an encountered creature. Also a large party will have a cumulatively large chance of knowing even a 'unique' creature. Optionally, the DM might only allow the best two characters to try to 'recognize' a creature. This rule also makes the players decide if they wish to sacrifice valuable time studying a creature that might be attacking them!

Common Creatures and Exceptions - An exception to this rule applies to creatures with a frequency listed as 'common' in the *AD&D Monster Manual* (MMI), *Monster Manual II* (MMII) or the *Fiend Folio* (FF) e.g. orcs (MMI, page 76). Such 'common' creatures will generally be recognized fairly immediately by characters. Characters will also of course recognize creatures they have met/fought before. It also seems reasonable to allow characters to recognize any creature that they can speak the language of. Giant versions of well-known creatures might also be easy to 'recognize' regardless of their listed frequency, e.g. giant wasp (MMI, page 99).

Common creatures in uncommon places - Generally most 'common' creatures will be known to a character, unless the character is exploring a foreign environment, e.g. a woolly rhinoceros (MMI, page 82) may be 'common' in a subarctic region, but if the character is not familiar with the subarctic region, then they cannot be presumed to automatically recognize that 'common' creature, and so in those situations the table entries below for 'common' creatures could be used.

Notorious creatures - Some creatures may be listed as 'very rare' or even 'unique', but might otherwise be quite notorious (e.g. dragons, centaurs, minotaurs, etc.), and so probably would be 'recognized' by all characters regardless of their listed frequency statistic.

Common sense test - Therefore, a common sense test should be applied to decide if a character would immediately recognize a creature without having to resort to the suggested rules in this article.

In addition, while some creatures might be well known to characters, they might not be that easy to recognize immediately, such as vampires (MMI, page 99) due to their human resemblance etc. Of course, while characters might 'recognize' a creature, that does not make them an expert on that creature, and so what they actually know about it (rightly or wrongly) might vary quite a lot.

Base% for 'Creature Recognition'

The following values have been taken from MMII, page 5, which details the likelihood of meeting a creature based on its 'Frequency' statistic as recited in the MMI:

Frequency	Base %
Unique ‡	0
Very rare	3
Rare	7
Uncommon	20
Common †	65

‡ = unless creature is 'notorious' like a deity, then base value is 100%

† = this base value is only relevant when the character is outside of a habitat that they are familiar with e.g. an elf in an aquatic environment (otherwise the base% is 100%)

The base % for 'Creature Recognition' is the unmodified % chance that a character will recognize a creature when at least 1 round is spent studying that creature. The base% for 'Creature Recognition' is reduced or increased depending on the various attributes of the player character.

Simplified rule - However, a simplified rule (i.e. without using modifiers) would be to use the above table as the adventuring parties' overall % chance of recognizing an encountered creature.

Character Modifiers

The base% for 'Creature Recognition' is modified by each character's various abilities. The relevant factors are:

- Class
- Level
- Intelligence
- Race

Character Class:

Class	Modifier
Cleric [3]	0
Druid [1]	0
Fighter	-10
Ranger [1]	-5
Paladin [2]	-5
MU	3
Illusionist	2
Thief	-7
Assassin	-7
Monk	-7
Bard	1

1 = Rangers and Druids: the final 'Creature Recognition' value (i.e. base + modifiers) is multiplied by 3 when the creature is a woodland creature

2 = Paladin: +3 is added to the final 'Creature Recognition' value (i.e. base + modifiers), and that value multiplied by 3 when the creature is undead

3 = Cleric: +5 is added to the final 'Creature Recognition' value (i.e. base + modifiers), and that value multiplied by 5 when the creature is undead

The class modifier is intended to reflect the general studious natures of the various classes, especially when it comes to the study of unusual creatures. Magic users are the most naturally studious and may need to know about various creatures to understand various magics, and for the possibility for obtaining mysterious spell components from them. Clerics and paladins tend to be interested in unusual creatures only to the extent that it relates to serving their deity. Rangers and Druids are naturally more interested in woodland creatures (hence the bonus).

Character Level:

- +1 per level of the character.

This modifier is intended to reflect the ability of a character to learn on the job, as they become more seasoned by experience, and perhaps by simply talking to fellow adventurers over time.

Character Intelligence:

Intelligence	Modifier
< 16	0
16	+1
17	+2
18	+3

This modifier is intended to reflect that more intelligent characters are more likely to be more studious, and/or are able to recall what they have learnt.

Character Race:

Optionally, the DM might allow elves a bonus to recognize woodland creatures (e.g. +3) and dwarves and gnomes to recognize underground creatures (e.g. +3) etc.

Worked Examples

Example 1:

A 5th level magic user, with an intelligence of 17 will have a 'Creature Recognition' modifier of +10 (i.e. +3 (for being a magic user) +5 (for being 5th level) +2 (for 17 Intelligence))

Frequency	Base %	Modifier	Sum
Unique	0	+10%	+10%
Very rare	3	+10%	+13%
Rare	7	+10%	+17%
Uncommon	20	+10%	+30%
Common	65	+10%	+75%

Therefore, if this magic user spends at least 1 full round studying a 'very rare' creature then there is a 13% chance that the magic user will 'recognize' what the creature is (see later for what they might actually know about it).

Example 2:

By contrast, a 9th level fighter, with an intelligence of 8 will have a 'Creature Recognition' modifier of -1 (i.e. -10 (for being a fighter) +9 (for being 9th level) +0 (for 8 Intelligence))

Frequency	Base %	Modifier	Sum
Unique	0	-1%	-1%
Very rare	3	-1%	+2%
Rare	7	-1%	+6%
Uncommon	20	-1%	+19%
Common	65	-1%	+64%

Therefore, if this seasoned fighter spends at least 1 full round studying a very rare creature then there is a 2% chance that they will 'recognize' what the creature is (see later for what they might actually know about it). Of course, a negative score (e.g. -1 for the 'unique' creature) gives the fighter no chance of recognizing that creature.

Example 3:

A 5th level cleric, with an intelligence of 16 will have a 'Creature Recognition' modifier of +6 (i.e. 0 (for being a cleric) +5 (for being 5th level) +1 (for 16 Intelligence))

Frequency	Base %	Modifier	Sum
Unique	0	+6%	+6%
Very rare	3	+6%	+9%
Rare	7	+6%	+13%
Uncommon	20	+6%	+26%
Common	65	+6%	+71%

Therefore, if this cleric spends at least 1 full round studying a 'very rare' creature then there is a 6% chance that the cleric will 'recognize' what the creature is (see later for what they might actually know about it).

However, if the creature is undead, then this value is 70% (i.e. 9% is modified by adding 5 and then multiplying by 5 i.e.: (9+5)x5 = 70%, i.e. see the footnotes in the Character Class table above. Optionally, the DM might also give a +1 bonus to turn such a creature, based on their acquired knowledge of that creature.

Likewise, if the above character where a druid (not a cleric) then the chance of 'Creature Recognition' would also be = 9% (i.e. (3+(0+5+1)). However, if the creature were a woodland creature, this chance would be trebled to give 27%, i.e. see the footnotes in the Character Class table above.

Situational Modifiers

Study Time Modifiers:

Study Time (rounds)	1	2	3 (or more)
Modifier	0	+1	+2

It is repeated (for the reasons given above) that at least one full round must be spent studying the creature to have a chance of 'recognizing' it.

This modifier is intended to reflect that the more time spent studying the creature the more likely it is that the character will 'recognize' the creature studied. The character must have a clear view of the creature to study it. In that way the Fighter in **Example 2** above, who spends 3 rounds studying a unique creature would have a 1% (i.e. -1+2 = +1) chance of 'recognizing' it.

For a magic user out of spells lurking at the back of a melee, this gives them a useful role, and this might result in information that they can pass on to his fellow party members e.g. *"It's an Anhkheg, attack the soft underbelly!!*".

Melee Modifiers:

Character is in melee: -20

Character is under missile or magical attack: -15

This modifier is intended to reflect the fact that when a character is in mortal danger they are not able to think as clearly as one that has time for calm study.

Characters trying to recognize a creature can defend themselves but cannot attack.

What the Character 'Knows'

Just because a character recognizes a creature (and probably at least knows a name for it), does not mean that they are an expert on that creature. In fact, along with correct facts, the character might have learnt some wrong 'facts' too!

The following table could be used to determine the Degree of Knowledge that the character has obtained about the creature that they have 'recognized':

Degree of Knowledge	Unique	Very rare	Rare	Uncommon	Common
Sketchy	1-80	1-50	1-30	1-20	1-10
Basic	81-90	51-80	31-50	21-30	11-20
Core	91-94	81-90	51-80	31-50	21-30
Detailed	95-97	91-95	81-90	51-80	31-50
Comprehensive	98-99	96-98	91-95	81-90	51-80
Specialist	00	99-00	96-00	91-00	81-00

Therefore, if a player rolls 81 for a 'very rare' creature on the table above (i.e. for a creature that their character 'recognizes'), then their character will have a "Core" Degree of Knowledge of the recognized creature.

Optionally, the DM might choose to also apply the character's Recognize Creature Modifier to this roll. As such, the magic user in **Example 1** above would have his Degree of Knowledge upgraded from "core" to "detailed" knowledge (i.e. 81+10=91), the fighter in **Example 2** above would have their Degree of Knowledge downgraded from "core" to "basic" knowledge (i.e. 81-1=80), and the cleric in **Example 3** above would be unaffected (81+0=81), and so would still have a "core" Degree of Knowledge of that 'very rare' creature.

Of course, the DM can provide facts to the player that he thinks are appropriate. Alternatively, the following table could be used to determine how many 'correct facts' and 'wrong facts' the character might know.

Facts known	Correct Facts	Wrong Facts
Sketchy	1d2	1d2+1
Basic	1d3	1d2
Core	1d3+1	1d2-1
Detailed	1d3+2	1d3-2
Comprehensive	1d4+2	1d4-3
Specialist	30 secs to read MM/FF	NA

Correct Facts Known

The following facts in the table below could be known by the character, e.g. the monster statistics recited in the MMI, MMII or FF (roll and sum a **1d8+1d12** roll):

Roll	Detail
2	Frequency
3	Number of Appearing
4	% in Lair
5	Move
6	Hit Dice
7	AC
8	Treasure Type
9	Number of Attacks
10	Damage
11	Special Attacks
12	Special Defences
13	Magic Resistance
14	Intelligence
15	Alignment
16	Psionics
17	Detail from description
18	Detail from description
19	Detail from description
20	Detail from description

Note, statistically summing a 1d12 roll and a 1d8 roll means that low values (e.g. 2 to 5) and high values (e.g. 17 to 20) appear much less frequently than the numbers between.

It is recommended that the facts known by the character should not be too precisely given/stated e.g. numerical values could be +/- 15%. Or, these numerical values could be expressed in broad categories, e.g. AC values could be expressed in the following terms "nearly invulnerable (e.g. AC -10 to -6), very heavily armored (e.g. AC -5 to -3), heavily armored (e.g. AC -2 to 0), well armored (e.g. AC 1 to 4), lightly armored (e.g. AC 5 to 7), weakly/unarmored (e.g. AC 8 to 10)", and for example 'Treasure Type' might best be expressed in levels of relative richness etc. To some extent this converts 'meta facts' (known by players) to 'non-meta facts' (known by characters).

Wrong 'Facts' Known

The DM is at liberty to make up any wrong 'facts' that the character has inadvertently picked up about the creature (e.g. perhaps they obtained these 'facts' by talking to some drunk retired fighter in a tavern who was exaggerating about his past, or by reading a mistranslated arcane tomb) that best suit the creature, perhaps expanding on features that relate to the creatures appearance. Use the above table to choose what type of "fact" is wrong.

The Need for Speed

by Anthony Miller

Faster is generally better!

Author's Note: *I have played AD&D for over 30 years. I first DMed the day I heard of the game. I have been lucky enough to play with a consistent group of friends and family during this time. Now, both my sons play with us every week.*

While I love the game, there are some elements I feel need to be modified or updated. I have created several in-house rules, and this article describes one of them.

Check for Initiative

Ed knew his halfling thief, Small Stature, was in trouble. He couldn't beat an ogre by himself. But he also knew escape was only a few feet away in the form of the open door just behind the ogre. A quick initiative check for his side on a d6 and ... crap, a one. Ah, well, at least the group cleric has a **Rod of Resurrection**.

The initiative check is one of the most important aspects of play in any *AD&D* game. Yet, according to the 1st edition *Dungeon Masters Guide* (DMG), initiative is determined for each side by a roll of one d6. Whichever side rolls highest goes first. This does not take an individual character's dexterity into account as this is mentioned in the rules as being expressed in the dexterity bonus for Armor Class. Ouch! Kind of tough on the guys who rely almost completely on speed to keep them alive.

Because of this, I devised my own initiative system. This has been play tested for many years and I have found it to work very well. With this system, each player rolls a separate 1d10. Each number rolled represents the segment in which that character is allowed an action. For instance, a roll of 6 on 1d10 would indicate the character would act in segment 6. Segments are counted up from one to ten, so a low roll is the most favorable. The Dungeon Master then counts the segments up from one, with each player stating their action during the segment in which they may act. The opposing side can be rolled individually or by monster type by the Dungeon Master. I use both methods--whatever suits the situation.

In order to account for faster characters, dexterity is allowed to modify the roll. Starting at a 16 dexterity, the player is allowed a bonus to the initiative roll. A 16 dexterity allows a -1 bonus (minus being good here), 17 allows -2 bonus, 18 allows -3 bonus, and so on. The chart below shows all the modifiers. For the sake of completeness, I have also included all Armor Class modifiers and Missile Bonus/Save Bonuses as per the *Players Handbook* (PHB) and *DMG*.

Bonuses for Dexterity

Dexterity	Initiative Modifier	AC Bonus	Missile/ Saves *
15	-0	-1	+0
16	-1	-2	+1
17	-2	-3	+2
18	-3	-4	+3
19	-4	-4	+3
20	-5	-4	+3
21	-6	-5	+4
22	-7	-5	+4
23	-8	-5	+4
24	-9	-6	+5
25	-10	-6	+5

* Saves bonus applies only to external spells such as *Fireballs*, *Lightning Bolts*, etc. ... and *Breath Weapons*.

Boots of Speed, **Boots of Striding and Springing**, *Haste* spells and other such items or spells are not used to modify the initiative roll. Initiative is more than foot speed, but is about total reaction time. Even a modified reaction time, such as that given by a *Haste* spell or **Potion of Speed**, is not allowed to modify the initiative rolls due to the unusual and slightly disorienting effects of such magic. Dungeon Masters can allow such things to change the roll, but I do not.

Dividing Multiple Attacks Per Round

When using this system for combat, the Dungeon Master must account for players (or monsters) with multiple attacks in a round. The simplest way to do this is to evenly spread the number of attacks over the time

remaining in the round. Since the initiative roll indicates the segment in which their attacks begin, any remaining attacks happen before the round is complete. For example, a fighter with two attacks in a round who acts in segment 1 would attack in segment 1 and segment 6 (10 segments divided by 2 is 5. Segment 1+5 = segment 6 for the second attack). If the fighter acts in segment 4, the second attack would happen in segment 7, when acting in segment 6 he would get the second attack segment 8, and so on ...

If the fighter in question had three attacks per round and acted in segment 1, it is easiest to have the attacks come in segments 1, 5 and 10. If the same fighter attacked in the 7th segment he would attack in the 7th, 9th and 10th segments. It is OK to bunch the attacks up in later segments, but under no circumstances should a player be allowed more than two attacks in one segment. For example, if the fighter above had three attacks per round, but acted in the 10th segment, he would only get two attacks in 10th segment. The 3rd attack would be lost.

This prevents a player from saving up attacks by delaying his action and getting a flurry of attacks late in the round. Whenever opposing sides act in the same segment each side rolls a d6. High rolls win with ties being rerolled until there is a winner. In this way, the actions of all opponents happen sequentially. In the case where a magic-user casting a spell acts in the same segment as an orc, it would actually benefit the magic-user to act after the orc. That way if the orc caused damage to the magic-user, he would do so before the spell was started. The magic-user would then be able to complete his spell.

Beginning at 10th level I allow a player to activate an innate power or available magic item (such as a magic ring or magic power of a sword) in place of one attack. The activation requires 2 segments. So, if a fighter with two attacks attacked in the 1st segment, he could begin the activation of an innate power in the 6th segment. The power would go off in the 8th segment. If the power were activated in 1st segment it would activate in segment 3. The next attack would still come 5 segments later in segment 8. The gap between attacks is still maintained.

I believe this reflects an experienced player's ability to mix combat and magic effectively. It is conceivable that a player could go into a combat armed with a sword and a wand, striking with the sword and activating the wand during the same combat round. The activation can happen in place of either attack in the round, but there must be enough segments left in a round for the power to activate. Due to this, a power can only be activated until the 8th segment. If activated in the 9th or 10th segment the power would not have time to activate. I am aware this is a rule of convenience, but unless you allow wrap-around spell casting (I do and will submit an article on this in the future) it is the only way to handle this ability. Further, there is no off-hand penalty for using magic in this way as the rules make no mention of needing to use a magic item with the primary hand.

A move of up to 1/2 the character's movement rate may be performed in place of an attack. That is, a character could attack an opponent and, having defeated it, move to help another character, flee or whatever else was appropriate. No attacks are allowed in the round if the character moves greater than ½ his movement in the round.

Allowing an individual dexterity score to benefit a player in this manner makes a character more dynamic. Players can invest more effort in the character knowing that his own Dexterity can make a difference not only for him, but for the entire group.

Ed threw his dexterity modified initiative for Small Stature. A 4 on the d10 was the result. Modified for Small's 18 dexterity, a -3 bonus, his action comes in the 1st segment. The ogre opposing him also rolls a 4 on his d10 but has no modifiers for dexterity. He goes in the 4th segment. Yes! Small quickly dashes past the ogre to the beckoning open door. He'd come back to help in a minute. No, really, he would.

Ointment of Extraction

The ointment of extraction is a sweet-smelling golden paste. When the paste is smeared on a target's forehead, anointing them, it will sink into their skin and any poison in their system will be cried out of the target's eyes as black tears in 1d3+1 rounds. The ointment is usually found in a ceramic pot and will have 4d4 applications. Usable by: Any

GP value 7,000; XP value 1,000

by Ian Slater

Creature Feature: Amedio Vampire

by Lenard Lakofka

History

The Amedio Vampire (hereinafter Avampire) appeared first in the *Hold of the Sea Princes* as early as 566CY, though they may have been there much longer. While it is likely that a vampire was the starting place for this creature there was an intervention by either a powerful tribal witch doctor and/or a lich that resided in the heart of the Amedio Jungle. The resultant creature is quite different from the vampire now loose in most of the known *World of Greyhawk*© TSR/et. al. Some of these creatures have certainly traveled to other locations in the Flanaess.

The Avampires appearing in the Hold were two males and a female, who had once been human. One male was successfully destroyed, but the other two vanished leaving no trace of their passage. It is likely they took ship and left the Hold in either the year 567 or 568CY. They may have travelled together but there is no certainty.

What is believed to be an Avampire appeared briefly in Irongate in 570CY but disappeared taking one of three ships that was traveling to the Great Kingdom, Lendore Isle or Keoland. Three separate parties went in search of them but they all came up empty handed. The ship headed for Keoland supposedly never arrived. The other two had no trace of a human who filled the description of the 'man' they were seeking.

Since then there have been an instance of a group of Lions attacking a wagon train in the Great Kingdom what was highly suspicious. A man swore that he saw another man turn into a lion and then summon four others to his side.

Requirements, Attacks, and Capabilities

The Avampire was either human, orc, gnoll, flind, goblin or half orc. No other being including other humanoids and demi-humans can become one. If he or she had a profession in life knowledge of the profession is retained (see below). Those who are stupid (intelligence 8 or less), mad, possessed or insane cannot become an Avampire – they most certainly can die of course. Becoming an Avampire does increase physical strength but not intelligence.

The Avampire has the standard immunities of a Vampire, he/she cannot be put to sleep, charmed, poisoned, held or paralyzed. The Avampire is only hit by magic weapons.

The Avampire has a grasp, grasp, bite attack form (the bite can only be delivered if both hands grasp successfully. The Avampire will attempt to touch/grasp an opponent with both hands. His/her power grip will hold most victims firmly while he/she then attempts a bite as well.

The successful touch or grasp will require the victim to save versus paralysis twice. On the first save the victim is saving versus paralysis that has a duration of 10D10 rounds. (Only one save is required for this touch/grasp

even if both hands hit). The second, independent save, if failed, will reduce physical strength by one full point for D10 hours. The durations of these failed saves is not disclosed to the victim of course. The Avampire can attempt to grasp with both hands or simply touch the victim. He/she also does not have to attempt to bite even if the grasp of both hands is successful.

Those of 17 or higher strength might wrench themselves free of the grasp but note that if strength reduction has occurred the save is measured at the lower strength. If the paralysis succeeds of course there is no attempt to wrench free. To determine if the attempt to escape worked, roll d20 on the following table, the Break Free column indicates the roll necessary to succeed.

Strength	Break Free
17	19 - 20
18	18 - 20
18(01-50)	17 - 20
18(51-75)	16 - 20
18(76-90)	15 - 20
18(91-99)	14 - 20
18(00)	13 - 20

This roll to wrench free is from one or both hands that hit and grasp. Two separate rolls are not required if both hands hit.

If the Vampire simply touches the victim the bite cannot occur and the only possible harm is from the failure to save from paralysis or strength loss. If the grasp is successful, whether or not the victim wrenches free, d4+1 points of damage occur. Those who do not escape the grasp, or cannot because they are not strong enough, must suffer an attempt to bite. A successful bite drains one entire Energy Level from the victim, with no save allowed.

Note: if the victim successfully hits with his/her magic weapon for six or more points of damage the vampire must roll to hit with his/her bite at -3. If the vampire has the initiative then the weapon damage will come after the bite attempt. If the victim has the initiative then the bite might be thwarted. If the initiative is simultaneous then the blow will not prevent the bite.

Avampires cannot Charm by eye to eye contact.

The Avampire does regenerate at the rate of 2 points per melee round. He or she, if reduced to zero or fewer hit points will assume Gaseous Form.

The Avampire is capable of multiple shape changes:

He/she can turn Gaseous (movement rate is then 360 feet per round and the form can travel upward to a height of 50 feet. Strong wind will reduce this movement rate to as slow at 180 feet. But even tornado or hurricane winds will not break up the Gaseous Form. The Gaseous Form moves with purpose and with a strong sense of smell and taste. Vision is reduced to 120 feet. Even in Gaseous Form the Avampire can sense with his/her infravision.

He/she can turn into a stirge with 9+3 Hit Dice, AC: 2, move 18 (fly), one attack blood drain damage 2 -5 and Energy Drain of one level (save vs poison applies here, it does NOT apply to the bite of a Avampire in normal form). All immunities apply to the stirge form including being hit only by magic weapons. If the Avampire is in stirge form in a flight of other stirges they will attack at +1 to hit but at -1 to their armor class.

He/she can take on the form of a greater feline: Lion, Tiger, Panther or Leopard. It will have the claw/bite attacks of his counterpart but at +2 damage on each attack form. This feline attacks with 9+3 HD and has armor class 2. All immunities apply to the feline including being hit only by magic weapons.

All of these shape changes take the possessions of the Avampire along, including magic items. The shape change takes only one segment. If segments remain in the round additional movement may occur. If the Avampire has attacked in his natural form there is only a 40% change of an additional attack regime in the new form (if time in the round permits).

The Avampire can summon 3 to 30 stirges or 1 to 4 felines who are within six miles of his/her location. They will travel at near top speed to his/her aid and will fight to the death at his command. If the Avampire is slain or forced into Gaseous Form the stirges or felines might retreat. The felines need only have 2+1 or more hit dice and do not have to be a lion, tiger, panther or leopard.

Avampires have no power over rats, bats or wolves.

An Avampire can be turned, but as a GHOST instead of a vampire.

The Avampire is tolerant of Direct Sun Light for only one to four rounds and then will become powerless. This means the loss of their special abilities: it cannot summon, take other form, paralyze, reduce strength or energy drain. Movement is reduce to 90 feet per round). Thus he or she can pass into bright sunshine for a very brief period. Avampires can be outside on cloudy/overcast days and can remain in a building for an entire day or days regardless of whether this sun in

bright outside or not. In bright sunlight, if forced to fight, all physical attacks are at -2.

Moving water has no effect on the Avampire, he/she can go swimming if he/she likes.

The Avampire does have to rest and recuperate after 72 hours of continuous consciousness. That recuperation can be done in any very dark place and does not require a coffin or soil from its grave site. This makes the Avampire much harder to find and kill than the normal vampire asleep in his/or coffin during the day.

Destroying an Avampire

The Avampire is slain if exposed to direct sunlight in four rounds (after the one to four round grace period has lapsed). Once the grace period has lapsed he or she can do little more than stagger away.

He/she can be slain by beheading. A wooden stake will NOT penetrate his chest or back (since it is NOT magic) causing many a vampire hunter with a stake and hammer a great deal of distress! You might rule that a Blessed stake could penetrate but a To Hit roll would be required even if the Avampire is motionless.

Converting a Victim to an Avampire

The Avampire who kills a victim by damage or energy drain can will that victim to become an Avampire one day after the victim's burial. A victim that is dismembered, not buried or beheaded cannot rise. If a lesser vampire is successful created it will be in thrall to its master for a year and a day and then released. The 'lesser' vampire is that in name only. It has ALL of the powers of its master. It can be commanded to any action including walking into full sunlight if the master demands it.

If the figure had a profession prior to the change most of that knowledge and abilities will transfer. The percent chance is 70% + D20. Multiply that percent by the victim's XP total in life. One or more levels might be lost. The new Avampire cannot gain more levels in his/her prior profession.

Miscellaneous

It is not uncommon for an Avampire who summons stirges to drink half of the blood contained in the stirge. However drinking blood is NOT required of the Avampire but there is a price to pay. If he /she does not drink blood for 13 days he/she will not regenerate until a pint or more of blood is taken.

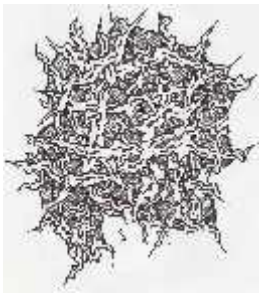
The Avampire can drain blood with its bite and choose NOT to drain an Energy Level. In like manner the Avampire can touch a human or humanoid and without the paralysis and strength drain potential but he/she must concentrate on NOT using those powers.

A person or humanoid that gives blood to this Avampire is subject to control as if a Charm were placed upon him. Thus CHARM comes from a bite (energy draining or not) and not from eye to eye contact.

A save versus magic is allowed to thwart the Charm at -2. Weak willed individuals prone to evil might give themselves willingly to the Avampire. If the Avampire is slain or if he moves more than ten miles away the Charm is broken. Then the Avampire can regain that Charm at -4 to the victim's saving throw if another pint of blood is taken (given)

Amedio Vampire

Frequency:	Rare
No Appearing:	1 or 2
Armor Class:	2
Move:	12" and special
Hit Dice:	9+3
% in Lair:	25%
Treasure Type:	A
No of Attacks:	3
Damage/Attack:	1d4+1/1d4+1/Energy Drain
Special Attacks:	Paralysis and Strength Reduction, Energy Drain
Special Defenses:	Hit only by Magical Weapons
Magic Resistance:	Immune sleep, charm, poison, paralysis
Intelligence	9 to 18
Strength:	18 (90)
Alignment:	Evil (chaotic tendencies)
Size:	Medium\
Psionic Ability:	Nil
Level/XP Value:	5,400 + 14/HP



Friend or Foe: The Tinkers

by Bryan Fazekas

The group commonly referred to as The Tinkers is a loosely joined group currently consisting of four couples. The members have diverse skills and make their living as roving tradesmen. They travel from community to community, remaining in an area and selling their skills until the need for them is reduced, then they move on.

Kantner

The core of the group is the blacksmith Kantner and his weaver/tailor wife, Grace. Kantner is a bear of a man, standing 6'6" tall and massing nearly 300 lbs of pure muscle. His close cropped hair and beard are dark brown with a few hints of grey in the temples and white on his chin. He has scar tissue on his face from burns and he looks like he badly lost a fight. All he says about that is the other guy looked worse. However, once people get past his appearance, he's surprisingly charismatic and people instinctively trust him. He's also disgustingly honest, demanding good wages and providing excellent service in exchange. In contrast he's provided free service for people in desperate need, and has a soft spot for single women with children.

Although he bills himself as a blacksmith, he's also a talented armorer and weapon smith. Most think of him as big, ugly, and possibly dumb ... and fail to consider that appearances are deceiving and that he can use the weapons he makes.

He also tolerates no man getting too friendly with his wife and turns down all opportunities with women who want to give him personal thanks for his help. His genial nature hides a violent temper. He never drinks spirits and never drinks more than two mugs of wine or ale. His normal good judgment leaves when he drinks heavily and his face shows the results of his last drunken episode nearly two decades ago.

Kantner; Fighter L6; hp 74; AC 6 / 0; # att 1 @ +2 to-hit; D/A 1d10+ 3. Kantner normally wears special leather clothing produced by Kaukonen, granting AC 7 plus his dexterity. He has a set of full plate armor he wears if battle is necessary. His preferred weapon is a great sword, but he's handy with a dagger, long word, short sword, and mace.

Grace

Kantner's wife Grace is a marked contrast, being a foot shorter and less than half his weight. Her waist long hair is a similar dark brown, framing a beautiful face. She is even more charismatic then her husband, but does not instill the level of trust that he unconsciously does. Deceivingly muscular, she is a skilled weaver and tailor, capable of turning many materials into cloth and producing clothing from the mundane to the spectacular. Her skill is such that she could make an excellent living producing clothing for the wealthy in any large city. But she loves her husband and enjoys the traveling lifestyle.

The others in the group do not know that she was born into a family of professional thieves, and was trained literally from birth to be a thief. When she was fifteen she met Kantner and fell in love, enough that when he was leaving the city they were in she ran away with him. Her one fear is that they will encounter her family, as she knows they will hold a grudge against her husband, even though the choice was hers.

Grace is not as honest as Kantner, but would never steal from the poor. She exercises her skills on occasion, mostly to deal with those who would cheat her extended family. Any who cheat them suffer for it.

Grace, Fighter L3/Thief L6; hp 47; AC 4; # att 1; D/A 1d8. Like her husband Grace typically wears the special leather clothing. Her preferred weapon is a long sword, but she ALWAYS has several daggers concealed on her person.

Jorma

Grace and Kantner have one child, Jorma, who in his mid-teens stayed with a druid grove for two years. He became a druid and resumed traveling with his parents. He is the group's veterinarian and botanist, providing services for the animals of the communities they visit.

Jorma takes more after his mother than his father. At 5'9" he lacks his father's height and bulk, but certainly is not a weak man. He also lacks his father's temper, making up for it with his mother's burning determination.

Two years ago the Tinkers took in a sullen young half-ogre. The girl had been mistreated all her life and the different treatment by his parents completely changed her disposition. She focused hard on becoming a good blacksmith and her ill-humored personality transformed almost overnight into a bright, friendly one. The young druid emulated his parents and treated her well, causing her to blossom.

Jorma realized he wasn't as wise as he thought as he did not foresee that Casady would become enamored with him. He also discovered that when a half-ogre really wants to kiss you, saying no is not a possibility. Making it worse, he had no idea that he would like it. Compounding his lack of vision, he also did not divine that she would grow on him, her friendly personality a good match for his own out-going one. To everyone's surprise, they married and have been happy, each complementing the other.

Being married to a half-ogre has its challenges. Casady is jealous and Jorma learned quickly to give her no reason to be jealous, as she beats women who intrude on her territory. He has no interest in straying and makes it clear to any interested women that messing with him is not worth the risk.

Jorma, Druid L2; hp 18; AC 6 / 5; # att 1; D/A 1d8. The druid typically wears the special clothing produced by Kaukonen, and will pick up a wooden shield if he can in combat situations, fighting with a wide bladed sword (treat as scimitar).

Spells (4x1st): *Animal Friendship*, *Speak with Animals*, *Faerie Fire*, *Entangle*.

Casady

Nearly two years ago the Tinkers took in a young woman of ogrish parentage. Her origins are unknown other than her mother was human. The woman had passed through a large village, leaving behind her five year old daughter. The local clerics grudgingly took care of her, but she felt no love and was the local outcast. Due to her parentage she's not a pretty girl, but is surprisingly sweet and gentle.

Realizing she had no future in the village, the tall lass (6'6") found that the Tinkers accepted her in a way the people that raised her did not. She asked to become Kantner's apprentice and eagerly left the town behind to pursue her new trade. Over the next year her natural aptitude for the trade made her a proficient helper. She also spent a fair amount of time with Jorma with the idea of becoming a druid, but they both realized quickly that the requirements of becoming a druid were beyond her.

Casady fell in love with the young druid and pursued him. For reasons his parent still don't understand, Jorma married the half-ogre and appears happy with her. They have no objection to their daughter-in-law, but don't understand the attraction. The one thing that mars their happiness is that Casady is insecure about her

appearance, and has made it clear to her very attractive husband that wandering hands will be broken hands. Similar to her father-in-law, she has no tolerance for any woman who dallies with her husband.

Casady, Fighter L3; hp 37; AC 5 / 5; # att 1; D/A 1d8. The half-ogre wears her leather clothing stained dark brown like her husband. She prefers the longsword but typically has some type of club nearby.

Creach

This man is the bowyer/fletcher of the group, producing and repairing bows. He is always on the lookout for materials for arrows and any time he sits he's making arrows. The only time he stops is when he's drinking.

Like Kantner, he's not a good looking man, but in contrast to the big man's burns and scars, naturally blonde Creach is simply plain and unappealing, having a short, squat body. And like Kantner, his natural charisma makes up for his lack of good looks, enough that he married the beautiful Signe.

All find them to be a happy couple. However, the couple is not married. She is a professional thief and he is her body guard. They pretend to be a couple to disguise their relationship.

Creach is not a bright man and he knows it. He made his living as a strong arm thief until he lucked onto a scene where Signe was caught in her thieving. His ready sword made fast work of the men that had caught her, and they fled together. Realizing that he had far better chances for success and continued life with her than without, he stayed with her. It was her idea to act as a married couple, and not being stupid he agreed.

Creach is not very bright, but he realizes that Signe tolerates him because he is useful, and he strives to continue to be useful. He also never oversteps the boundaries of their relationship and makes himself scarce when she takes a lover.

He honestly likes Kantner and has an unreasoning fear of Grace – he won't do anything to cross her. He gets along fine with the others, excepting Kaukonen, who he actively dislikes. While he has no problem coming to blows with the cleric, he knows it will get them kicked out of the group and fears Signe's wrath more than anything in the world, excepting a rope.

Creach, Fighter L5; hp 46; AC 7 / 4; # att 1; D/A 1d8+1. This fighter always wears the special clothing produced by Kaukonen, and will pick up his shield if he can in combat situations. If he has preparation, he has a set of good quality chain mail, and he always has a bow and quiver of twenty arrows nearby. [If the DM uses weapon specialization, Creach is specialized in longbow.]

Signe

This beautiful woman with long blond hair is a counterpoint to Grace. Signe is blond to Grace's dark brown, and while she is more beautiful, she lacks the older woman's natural charm. In fact, Signe learned to limit her interactions with others as her sullen nature quickly degrades the initial impression her beauty makes.

Her affinity for horses and other large animals is a welcome addition to the group, and she has been the group healer for the last year that she and Creach have been with the Tinkers. She is jealous of Jorma's abilities as a healer of animals although she finds him attractive. His wife Casady has an instinctive dislike for the cleric and ensures that she isn't alone with the druid for any length of time.

Signe is also jealous of Kantner and Grace's relationship and would be happy to dally with the big man, but he's clearly a one-woman man. She also has a fear of the older woman that she doesn't understand, but she's smart enough to accept that gut instinct as real and, so far, has avoided the temptation to feel Kantner out. Signe hides her dislike and disdain for Kaukonen, considering him a priss.

In larger towns where the chance of getting caught are less and the risks for gains is worth it, Signe and Creach steal what they can. She knows that if caught, Kantner is the bigger danger than the local authorities. He is a prideful man who treats people fairly, and would take it as a personal affront if any in his group proved less than honest.

Signe, Cleric L3 / Thief L3; hp 20; AC 3 / 2; # att 1; D/A 1d6+1. She normally wears the special clothing produced by Kaukonen, and will pick up his shield if she can in

combat situations. She generally have a mace or short sword handy, and always has several daggers on her person.

Spells (4x1st, 1x2nd): *Cure Light Wounds*, *Cause Light Wounds*, *Command*, *Light*, *Darkness*.

Kaukonen

This cleric has been with the Tinkers for seven years, leaving his local temple to minister to the people in the smaller towns. Initially driven by a need to help others, he has grown to like the lifestyle, enjoying meeting new people and seeing new places as much as helping them.

He doesn't have much call to practice his skills as a tanner, but on occasion helps out at a local tannery and has taught the skill to others. His leatherwork is impressive, and his products range from saddles to clothing to armor. All of the Tinkers wear clothing produced by him, which deceptively contains metal plates in strategic places (treat as studded leather) and thickened leather in others.

A bright and energetic man, he rarely lacked for female company, although he avoided married women and long term entanglements, preferring the young and not-so-bright as companions of the moment. His messy sandy-brown hair frames a rugged looking face, instantly attracting women even when he doesn't want it.

That ended when Joey joined the group. She was everything that he didn't like – highly intelligent, older, and plain as an old copper piece. She summarily rejected his advances, forcing him to learn to attract a woman by his actions, not his looks. In the end he achieved success with her, and discovered that he liked the man he had become far more than the man he had been. His serious wife makes him happy and he strives to ensure that she is happy with him. He is proud that she is good at anything she takes an interest in.

Kaukonen knows very little of his wife's background and doesn't understand why she finally accepted him. She seems happy but can be reserved, even with him in private moments.

Kaukonen, Cleric L4; hp 28; AC 6 / 2; # att 1; D/A 1d6+1. This cleric normally wears the special clothing he produced, and will pick up his shield if she can in combat situations. He generally has a mace available, and will use a good quality set of banded mail for combat.

Spells (5x1st, 4x2nd): *Cure Light Wounds* (x2), *Light*, *Remove Fear*, *Purify Food & Drink*, *Hold Person*, *Slow Poison*, *Speak with Animals*, *Snake Charm*. He also carries two scrolls of 1d4+1 spells each (DM's choice).

Joey

This mage is nearly six feet tall, having a thin, angular body topped by a plain face whose eyes shine with intelligence. Naturally inquisitive, she is a skilled teacher and does well with slow students, both children and adults. In her wake she leaves the gift of literacy, which she considers her personal legacy to the world.

Her hobby was sewing, an activity that keeps her fingers busy while leaving her mind free for other pursuits. After joining the Tinkers she became Grace's assistant, producing serviceable clothing. Although her skills are improving, she knows she is not capable of producing the finery that Grace does without apparent effort. [*Author Note: There are cantrips that can assist in sewing. I don't use cantrips in my campaigns so I have not fleshed this out.*]

Joey enjoys the attentions of her much younger husband, and is honestly surprised that the man's roving eyes settled on her and stayed there. It makes no sense to her logical mind and she fears he will grow tired of her, but that doesn't stop her from reveling in his attentions.

She is reticent about her background. She grew up in a land governed by a magocracy, where those without magical talent were second class citizens. A civil war between magic-user factions erupted, and while the mages were busy dealing with each other the majority of

the population rose up and slaughtered them. Joey fled fast and far to escape death.

Like most of her peers, the mage did not mistreat the non-wizards, but neither did she do anything to endear herself to them. She was neither good nor bad, just indifferent.

Now? She has an appreciation for the non-spell casters and does her best to educate them and to use her magic responsibly. When she fled her homeland she knew there was a price on her head, and the non-wizard winners of the civil war swore that every wizard would die. She's fairly sure that after more than a decade of wandering she's far enough away to avoid bounty hunters, but that fear keeps her from sharing too much with her husband. If they do catch up with her, she doesn't want the others to suffer, especially Kaukonen. She carries spells that will enable her to escape, hopefully drawing trouble away from her extended family.

Joey gets along well with the others, but she doesn't trust Signe or Creach. The man has made advances on her, which she rebuffed. The woman makes her nervous – the mage is sure that the other woman would sell her to bounty hunters without even thinking about it. The others, not even her husband, do not realize how powerful of a wizard she is. She downplays her skills and avoids drawing attention to herself.

Joey, Magic-User L8; hp 34; AC 9; # att 1; D/A 1d4. The group wizard is the only one that doesn't wear Kaukonen's special leather clothing – she says it affects her magic. But she does wear his normal leather clothing.

Spells (4x1st, 3x2nd, 3x3rd, 2x4th): *Burning Hands*, *Charm Person*, *Magic Missile*, *Sleep*, *ESP*, *Invisibility*, *Stinking Cloud*, *Fireball*, *Hold Person*, *Monster Summoning I*, *Confusion*, *Polymorph Self*. She carries two scrolls of 1d4+1 spells each levels 1 to 5, all spells she has in her books.

In addition to the spells in memory, her spell books contain the following: *Comprehend Languages*, *Detect Magic*, *Friends*, *Identify*, *Light*, *Mending*, *Read Magic*, *Run*, *Ventriloquism*, *Write*, *Continual Light*, *Darkness 15' Radius*, *Detect Invisibility*, *Locate Object*, *Mirror Image*, *Scare*, *Web*, *Wizard Lock*, *Clairaudience*, *Dispel Magic*, *Fly*, *Lightning Bolt*, *Secret Page*, *Suggestion*, *Tongues*, *Charm Monster*, *Fear*, *Fumble*, *Monster Summoning II*, *Wall of Fire*, *Wizard Eye*. She has 5th level spells that she cannot use yet: *Conjure Elemental*, *Hold Monster*, *Monster Summoning III*, *Teleport*, *Transmute Rock to Mud*. The books are hidden in a false panel under her bed in their wagon.

Author's Note: *I did not add magic items to the NPCs in this article. Usage of magic items is* ***very*** *subjective for dungeon masters, so I chose to leave them out.*

I run a high-magic campaign, and I typically place +1 items starting at 2nd level, and by the time the party hits 4th level most characters have magic weapons and armor, and some miscellaneous magic. I like items that get used up (1-time use, set charges, etc.) which gives me margin to replace things.

Around 4th to 5th level I start placing +2 items, and may start placing +3 at 7th level. There's no set rule here, I play it by ear, considering each party's composition.

For this group? Kantner would probably have one +2 item, and likely a specialty item such as a ***Sword +1*** *that can* Create Food and Drink *3/day. Sound like an odd item? Not for a party that has run out of iron rations in the wilderness or deep underground!*

Joey would likely have ***Bracers of Defense****, and probably a* ***Ring of Protection****. The others would have* ***+1*** *items.*

Each NPC has a stash of 10d10 coins of each type, plus 3d4 gems valued at 10d10 GP each. Signe and Creach will have a stash of 3d4 items valued at 10d10 GP each, but avoid keeping anything that is easily identifiable.

Name	Race	Sex	Age	Class	Align	Skills
Kantner	human	male	42	fighter L6	N	blacksmith, armorer, weapon smith
Grace	human	female	37	fighter L3 / thief L6	N	weaver, tailor
Jorma	human	male	21	druid L2	N	Veterinarian, botanist
Casady	half-ogre	female	19	fighter L3	N	blacksmith apprentice
Creach	human	male	25	fighter L5	NE	bowyer/fletcher
Signe	human	female	31	cleric L3 / thief L3	NE	large animal handler, healer
Kaukonen	human	male	24	cleric L4	NG	tanner, leatherworker, healer
Joey	human	female	38	magic-user L8	N	tailor, teacher

Name	Kantner	Grace	Jorma	Casady	Creach	Signe	Kaukonen	Joey
Str	18/62	14	15	18/88	17	10	11	10
Int	10	11	10	9	9	11	10	17
Wis	12	11	17	10	9	14	16	10
Dex	15	17	15	16	12	18	15	15
Con	18	15	15	18	15	15	15	15
Cha	14	15	17	11	12	9	13	10
Com	7	12	13	9	8	15	13	10

The physical stats (Str, Dex, Con) are generally above average for this group, reflecting their active life.

In The Campaign

The Tinkers may be encountered in a number of situations: on the road, staying at an inn, and/or settled in a village. They don't stay any place for long, often spending one to four weeks in a single location from early spring until late fall. The longest time spent will be during the winter months – they typically choose a larger town or small city to last out the winter. They make most of their income during the warmer weather, but set themselves up for work over the winter, both for income and to stave off boredom. They don't have a fixed travel circuit, but generally pass through the same places every 1 to 3 years.

Kantner, Grace, and Jorma are fairly well known. Kaukonen is recognizable to most, but the others are too new to travel to achieve any type of recognition in the places they travel.

On the Road: Each couple has two wagons, both drawn by oxen. One wagon is their personal quarters, the second contains work materials. The wagon contents vary according to each couple's skills and interests. They often accept raw materials and finished goods in payment, and are keen to barter.

When traveling they are all well-armed and difficult to surprise. They are all suspicious of anyone they meet, as most have been on the road long enough to know the dangers.

Signe and Creach will be open to dalliances, as long as none of the others will find out. They maintain their façade as a loving couple as their best disguise.

At an Inn: It is not unusual for the troupe of spend a week or more at an inn, plying their respective trades. They always make arrangements to protect their wagons, but will generally spend time each evening in a common room or tavern. Kantner will tell stories and the others will display wares to encourage sales.

Signe and Creach will be looking for dalliances, but again, will be cautious about exposure. Both will look for opportunities for theft, but will only take things of sufficient value with a low risk of getting caught.

Jorma is a good story teller like his father. Casady will always be right next to him, hovering to protect her territory.

In a Town: The situation in a town will resemble that of an inn. They are looking to sell their wares or services, and all are practiced sales people. Note that while they will using inn/tavern facilities (bath house, etc.) the couples normally sleep in their wagons for security. Plus they are comfortable there and don't risk the pests and parasites that often infest inns.

Interactions with Adventurers: As noted all of the Tinkers are cautious with strangers, especially armed groups met on the road. Kantner especially will not get involved in anything seriously illegal, although he might commit to helping others in quasi-legal activities if the goals are not involving greed or hate. Grace is more flexible than her husband in these areas but won't do anything that might damage her relationship with him.

Signe and Creach will agree to just about anything ... if the risk is low and the returns high.

The Tinkers are not adverse to having parties travel with them, assuming some level of trust is built up.

Toybox: Weapons Tables

By Nicole Massey

With the increase in the number of possible weapons, new tables need to be developed to determine the particular types of daggers, shields, swords, mass weapons, pole arms, and arrows found in the wild. All save the daggers and shields tables have random generation for both occidental and oriental environments.

Note: The weapons mentioned in this article are found in previous issues of *& Magazine*:

04 - Toybox: New Weapons I, Blades

05 - Toybox: New Weapons II, Primitive Weaponry

06 - Toybox: New Weapons III, India and the Stars

07 - Toybox: New Weapons IV, Pole Arms and Daggers

08 - Toybox: New Weapons V, Whips and Arrow

09 - Toybox: New Weapons VI, Rome and Other Random Weapons

This first group of tables is appropriate for a typical D&D campaign.

Table 1: Dagger Types

d00	Dagger Type
01-05	cestus
06-25	dagger
26-30	dagger, bone
31-40	dagger, parrying
41-45	dagger, stone
46-55	dirk
56-62	khukuri
63-72	knife
73-77	knife, bone
78-79	knife, death
80-84	knife, stone
85-89	main-gauche
90	mini blade
91-95	poinard
96-00	stiletto

Tables 2: Sword Types

d00	Sword Type
01	estock
02	foil
03	kama
04-08	scimitar
09	scythe
10	shikomi-zue
11-12	sickle
13	sword stick
14-16	sword, 2-handed
17-21	sword, bastard
22	sword, boku-toh
23-37	sword, broad
38	sword, brodrack
39	sword, claymore
40-49	sword, cutlass
50	sword, drusus
51-54	sword, falchion
55	sword, great
56-57	sword, katana
58-59	sword, kopesh
60-84	sword, long
85	sword, ninja-to & scabbard
86	sword, no-dachi
87	sword, parang
88-89	sword, rapier
90-91	sword, saber
92-96	sword, short
97	sword, tebuje
98	sword, urumi
99-00	sword, wakizashi

Tables 3: Mass Weapon Types

d00	Mass Weapon Type
01-02	aklys
03-12	axe, battle
13-14	axe, battle, 2-handed
15-16	axe, hand
17-18	axe, throwing
19	axe, tomahawk
20-21	belaying pin
22	blackjack
23	bo stick
24	bolas
25-34	club
35-39	cudgel
40-44	flail, footman's
45-49	flail, horseman's
50-54	hammer, maul
55-64	hammer, war
65	jitte
66	jo stick
67	kiseru (iron pipe)
68-69	mace, oriental
70-79	mace,footman's
80-86	mace,horseman's
87-88	morning star
89	nunchaku
90-92	pick, military, footman's
93-95	pick, military, horseman's
96	sai
97-98	sap
99	three-piece rod
00	tonfa

Table 4: Shield Types

d00	Shield Type
01-10	buckler
11-14	buckler, spiked
15-59	heater shield
60-63	matu
64-83	round shield
84-85	sang kauw.
86-00	tower shield

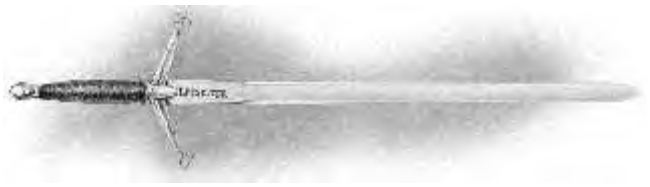


Table 5: Pole Arm Types

d00	Pole Arm Type
01-02	awl pike
03-04	bardiche
05	battle adze
06-07	bec de corbin
08-09	bill-guisarme
10-11	fauchard
12-13	fauchard-fork
14-18	gaff hook
19-23	glaive
24-25	glaive-guisarme
26-27	guisarme
28-29	guisarme-voulge
30-36	halberd
37	hammer, battle
38-39	hook fauchard
40	lajatang
41-42	lance, heavy
43	lance, jousting
44-45	lance, light
46-47	lance, medium
48	lirpa
49-50	lucern hammer
51-52	mancatcher
53	mecthar
54-55	military fork
56	nagimaki (horseman's glaive)
57	naginata
58-59	partisan
60-69	quarterstaff
70-71	ranseur
72	shakujo-yari
73-82	spear
83-84	spear, boar
85-86	spear, long
87	spear, stone
88-89	spetum
90	tetsubo
91-97	trident
98	uchi-ne
99-00	voulge

Table 6: Arrows

d00	Arrow Type
01-02	barbed
03-05	blunt-head
06-15	broad-head
16	daikyu
17-18	flaming
19-33	flight
34	frog crotch
35	humming bulb
36	major grapple
37	minor grapple
38-77	normal
78-92	sheaf
93	silver
94	stone biter
95	stone biter, adamantite
96	stone
97	wood biter
98-99	wooden
100	spiral

Oriental Adventures

This second batch of tables is suitable for an Oriental Adventures campaign.

Tables 7: Sword Types

d00	Sword Type
01	estock
02	foil
03-05	kama
06-09	scimitar
10	scythe
11	shikomi-zue
12-15	sickle
16	sword stick
17	sword, 2-handed
18-21	sword, bastard
22-31	sword, boku-toh
32-35	sword, broad
36-38	sword, brodrack
39	sword, claymore
40-44	sword, cutlass
45	sword, drusus
46	sword, falchion
47	sword, great
48-62	sword, katana
63	sword, kopesh
64-73	sword, long
74-77	sword, ninja-to & scabbard
78-82	sword, no-dachi
83-86	sword, parang
87	sword, rapier
88	sword, saber
89-92	sword, short
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94-95	sword, urumi
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28-29	bolas
30-39	club
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45-46	flail, horseman's
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48-52	hammer, war
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58-61	jo stick
62-64	kiseru (iron pipe)
65-69	mace, oriental
70-73	mace,footman's
74-75	mace,horseman's
76	morning star
77-80	nunchaku
81-83	pick, military, footman's
84-85	pick, military, horseman's
86-89	sai
90-92	sap
93-96	three-piece rod
97-00	tonfa

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02	bardiche
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05	bill-guisarme
06	fauchard
07	fauchard-fork
08-09	gaff hook
10-14	glaive
15	glaive-guisarme
16	guisarme
17	guisarme-voulge
18-25	halberd
26	hammer, battle
27	hook fauchard
28-32	lajatang
33	lance, heavy
34	lance, jousting
35	lance, light
36	lance, medium
37	lirpa
38	lucern hammer
39	mancatcher
40	mecthar
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52-56	naginata
57	partisan
58-67	quarterstaff
68	ranseur
69-70	shakujo-yari
71-78	spear
79-82	spear, boar
83	spear, long
84	spear, stone
85	spetum
86-90	tetsubo
91-95	trident
96-99	uchi-ne
00	voulge

Table 10: Arrows

d00	Arrow Type
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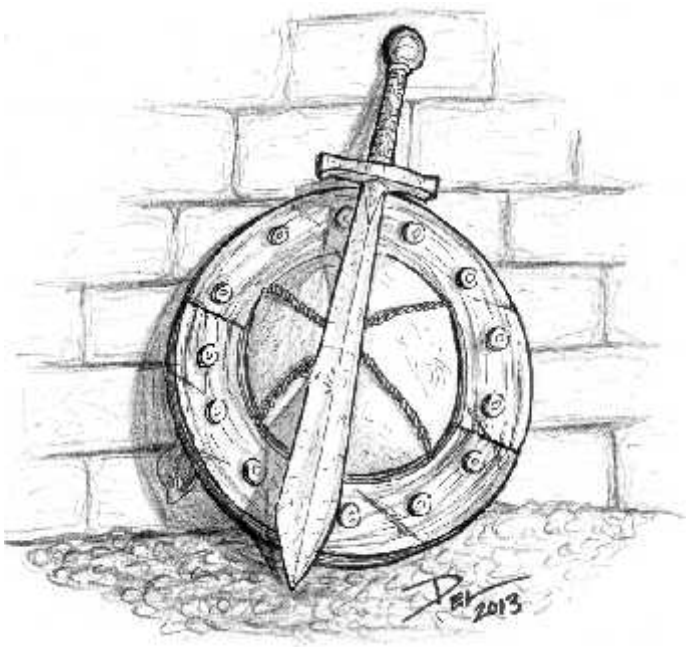
04-06	blunt-head
07-09	broad-head
10-49	daikyu
50	flaming
51	flight
52-55	frog crotch
56-59	humming bulb
60	major grapple
61	minor grapple
62-81	normal
82	sheaf
83-87	silver
88-89	stone biter
90	stone biter, adamantite
91-92	stone
93	wood biter
94-95	wooden
96-00	spiral



Spell Caster's Paradise I: Illusionist Spells

by Ian Slater

Cillian's Cross the Eagles

Level:	Illusionist 1
Type:	Alteration
Range:	Special
Duration:	1 round/level
Area of Effect:	sphere of radius of 10'/3 levels
Components:	S, M
Casting Time:	1 segment
Saving Throw:	negates

When Cillian's signature spell is cast all victims in the area of effect must save versus spells or become cross eyed for the duration of the spell. Cross eyed victims attack and save at -1, and spell casters cannot use spells for the duration if they fail their save. The material component of this spell is a pair of glass marbles that are rolled between the fingers while casting the spell.

Arolian's Chant of Unfathomable Slumber

Level:	Illusionist 1
Type:	Enchantment/Charm
Range:	0
Duration:	Special
Area of Effect:	3"
Components:	V
Casting Time:	1 segment
Saving Throw:	negates

When the illusionist casts this spell he begins to chant in a low droning fashion. All creatures in the area of effect who can hear the drone and are the illusionist's level in HD or less must make a saving throw or fall asleep. Victims will remain asleep until the illusionist stops chanting or they are woken up in another way, e.g. slapping or wounding will awaken affected creatures, but noise will not do so. Awakening requires 1 complete melee round, but if the illusionist stops chanting all victims wake immediately. Once a victim has saved no repeat save is necessary in later rounds. However, if a new victim enters the AOE while the spell is in effect they must save. Note that sleeping creatures can be slain automatically at a rate of 1 per slayer per melee round. The verbal component of this spell is the phrase spánokpieseň.

Konjarrin's Subtle Switch

Level:	Illusionist 1
Type:	Illusion/Phantasm
Range:	0
Duration:	special
Area of Effect:	two objects
Components:	V, S, M
Casting Time:	1 segment
Saving Throw:	none

Konjarrin's clever illusion makes any object on the illusionist's person (e.g. a wand) look like something mundane (e.g. a pin), while making something mundane on his person (e.g. a pin) look like the object in question. This switch of appearance does not work on illusionists (it appears as a very, very faint "over image" on each object). The spell is broken 1 day/level after the object is touched by someone other than the illusionist. The material component of this spell is a moth wing and a butterfly wing, both of which must be crushed in hand while speaking the words je to, že.

Ormaan's Olfactory Obscurement

Level:	Illusionist 1
Type:	Illusion/Phantasm
Range:	1"/level
Duration:	1 turn/level
Area of Effect:	1 individual/level
Components:	V, S, M
Casting Time:	1 segment
Saving Throw:	None

Ormaan's signature spell allows the illusionist to completely mask the odors of 1 individual/level, making them smell like whatever the illusionist wants. This spell can have two immediate consequences:

a) Invisible or concealed beings have a reduced chance of being detected. For the detection of invisibility table, the victim's intelligence rating and HD should be reduced 1 category each, e.g. a 15+HD creature with an 18 intelligence now has a 65 rather than 95 percent chance of detecting invisible creatures. Also, illusions concealing that individual are less likely to be disbelieved.

b) Beings made to smell particularly good, or bad, have the appropriate reaction modifier of + 30% or – 30% to encounter reactions

The material component of this spell is a clove of garlic and a rose petal, which are crushed together while speaking the phrase ruže pod inýmmenom.

Ulan's Cacophonous Clap

Level: Illusionist 1
Type: Illusion/Phantasm
Range: 0
Duration: special
Area of Effect: 1"/level
Components: S, M
Casting Time: 1 segment
Saving Throw: special

When the illusionist claps their hands together all creatures who can hear other than the caster and 1 other individual designated by the caster/level are impacted by the spell as follows:

Level	Effect of Spell
1	clapping noises come from all directions, save or distraction (-1 to hit) for 1 round
2	clapping noises come from all directions, save or distraction (-1 to hit) for 2 rounds.
3	clapping noises come from all directions, distraction (-2 to hit) for 1 round, no save
4	loud noise, save versus spells or deafness for 2 rounds (-1 to hit, +1 to AC)
5	loud noise, save versus spells or deafness for 2 rounds (-1 to hit, +1 to AC), save at –1
6	loud noise, deafness for 2 rounds (-1 to hit, +1 to AC), no save
7	booming noise, save versus spells or stunned for 1 round (unable to act)
8	booming noise, save versus spells or stunned for 2 rounds (unable to act), save at –1
9	booming noise, stunned for 1 round (unable to act), no save
10	explosive noise, save versus spell or unconscious for 2 rounds, items must save versus normal blow
11	explosive noise, save versus spell or unconscious for 2 rounds, items must save versus normal blow, both saves at –1
12	explosive noise, unconscious for 2 rounds, no save, items must save versus normal blow at -2
13	shockwave, save versus spell or knocked down, 1d6 damage, prone for 1 round, 30% + illusionist level chance to blow open doors, items must save versus crushing blow
14	shockwave, save versus spell or knocked down, 1d6 damage, prone for 1 round, save at -1, 40% + illusionist level chance to blow open doors, items must save versus crushing blow at -1
15	shockwave, save versus spell at -2 or knocked down, 1d6 damage, prone for 1 round, 50% + illusionist level chance to blow open doors, items must save versus crushing blow at -2

The material component of this spell is dirt or dust applied to both hands before clapping.

Fosnir's Rain Charm

Level: Illusionist 2
Type: Enchantment/Charm
Range: 1"/level
Duration: 2 rounds
Area of Effect: 2" radius/level circle
Components: V
Casting Time: 2 segments
Saving Throw: negates

It must be raining (moderate to heavy) when the spell is cast. Once cast, all victims who fail their save find that the rhythmic sound of the rain soothes them, and any aggressive acts are abandoned for the duration of the spell. Victims will defend themselves, but they will not attack others. The verbal component of this spell is a short poem that must be sung while the spell is cast.

Gil Namth's Hurricane Haymaker

Level: Illusionist 2
Type: Illusion/Phantasm
Range: Fist
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: 1 opponent
Components: S, M
Casting Time: 2 segments
Saving Throw: none

When the Haymaker is cast the illusionist taps into the victim's mind, and has it "fill in" a much greater hit than the fist actually made, the body reacts as if it had been hit by a battering ram. The illusionist compares his intelligence to his opponent's strength, for monsters the comparison is illusionist's level and HD, the difference between illusionist and victim score, if positive (e.g. the illusionist is higher), gives a bonus to hit and damage, capped at +4 for each. If negative, there is no penalty. Base damage varies by level. The illusionist may throw a number of punches with the haymaker determined by level, and a base damage determined by Level: Illusionist level 1-4, 1 punch, base damage 1d4; level 5-8, 2 punches, base damage 1d4+1; level 9-12, 3 punches, base damage 1d6; level 13 and above, 4 punches, base damage 1d6+1.

The material component for this spell is a fire opal worth at least 100 gp.

The Rage of Rikkitan

Level:	Illusionist 2
Type:	Enchantment/Charm
Range:	1"/level
Duration:	4 rounds + 1 round/level
Area of Effect:	individual
Components:	S, M
Casting Time:	2 segments
Saving Throw:	negates

When this spell is cast the illusionist reaches into the mind of the victim and does two simultaneous things. First, she draws out the strongest memories of hatred and anger from the victim's mind, and second, she stimulates the victim's instincts to violence.

The combination is significant, and if the victim fails their save they will immediately fly into a raging fit and attack whatever target the illusionist plants in their mind. The victim will charge, incurring a 2 point AC penalty, and must save versus breath weapon to avoid tripping and falling on rough ground, ending their action for the round and making them +2 to hit for the next round.

When they reach their target they will attack unarmed and attempt to pummel the victim as violently as possible. Their attacks will be at +1 to hit and +1 to damage due to raw fury, but they will lose their dexterity bonus to AC as they will be solely focused on beating the target to death. If their fists are not mailed, any punches on metal armor will cause 1 hp of damage to the spell's victim. Every 2 rounds after the target is reached the victim is entitled to make a save versus spells, if they are successful they emerge from the rage befuddled, and will be dazed and unable to act for a full round. The material component for this spell is a finger bone from a dead fighter and a drop of the illusionist's blood.

Peng Sang's Omni Vision

Level:	Illusionist 2
Type:	Alteration
Range:	6"
Duration:	1 turn/level
Area of Effect:	individual
Components:	V,M
Casting Time:	2 segments
Saving Throw:	None

The *Omni Vision* spell allows the illusionist to see 360 degrees around them and above for the duration of the spell. This negates the penalties associated with flank and rear attacks against them. It also makes it difficult for a thief to sneak up on the illusionist. The first time the illusionist uses this spell they will suffer a -3 to hit due to disorientation, the second time -2, the third time, -1, and subsequent times not at all. The illusionist might thus decide to cast the spell on an unwitting victim to take advantage of the disorientation effects. In this case the victim would get a save. The material component of this spell is a pinch of copper dust and a small glass lens, and the verbal component of the spell is the phrase vidětvšude .

Teutch's Tumbling Phrase

Level:	Illusionist 2
Type:	Alteration
Range:	0
Duration:	4 rounds + 1 rounds/level
Area of Effect:	illusionist
Components:	S, M
Casting Time:	1 segment
Saving Throw:	none

This spell is generally cast in response to a silence spell, when the illusionist casts Teutch's Tumbling Phrase , he dips his fingers in ink from giant squid and touches his hands to his lips. From that point forwards to the end of the spell's duration, any spell he casts with a verbal component has the words come out of his mouth as glowing symbols, and fly down to a space between his outstretched hands. When all the command words for the spell are in that space (the casting time of that spell-1 segment, 1 segment minimum), he brings his hands together and the spell goes off.

Spell Caster's Paradise II: Cleric Spells

by Ian Slater

Retribution

Level:	Cleric 4
Type:	Evocation, Conjuration/Summoning
Range:	0
Duration:	special
Area of Effect:	the cleric
Components:	V, S, M
Casting Time:	7 segments
Saving Throw:	negates

This spell may only be cast when the cleric is below half of his or her hp total. The spell is cast upon the cleric and "sits". When next they take damage, the damage is absorbed by the spell and the attacker must save versus spell or they take the damage instead. If the attacker makes their saving throw the damage is done to the cleric as usual. The spell will remain in effect until a maximum of 1 attack/3 levels of the cleric have been so reflected, at which point it is no longer effective. The material component of this spell is the cleric's holy symbol and a pair of teeth from a wild animal.

Scourge of the Unliving

Level:	Cleric 4
Type:	Evocation
Range:	0
Duration:	1 round/2 levels
Area of Effect:	special
Components:	V, S, M
Casting Time:	7 segments
Saving Throw:	none

A *Scourge of the Unliving* spell channels powerful positive plane energy into a weapon of the cleric's choosing (his or someone else's). A non-magical weapon must save versus magical lightning or be destroyed by this energy. A magical weapon must save versus crushing blow (any magical pluses are applied to the saving throw) or be destroyed. If the item survives the casting, it will do maximum dice damage to any undead it strikes for the duration of the spell, e.g. a weapon that does 1d8 hp damage would do 8 hp damage. The material component for this spell is the cleric's holy symbol and a smooth stone that has sat in the sunlight for a week.

Dreamtime

Level:	Cleric 5
Type:	Divination
Range:	0
Duration:	1 turn
Area of Effect:	cleric
Components:	V, S, M
Casting Time:	8 segments
Saving Throw:	none

A *Dreamtime* spell allows the cleric to tap into the collective subconscious of living creatures around them. When this is done the cleric gains several benefits:

- The cleric causes opponents to have powerful visions of deep-seated terrors and fears when attacking, causing immediate morale checks at a 25% penalty in any opponents whom they successfully.
- All allies of the cleric get a 25% bonus on morale while they can see him.
- The cleric may cast *command* once every two rounds for the duration of the spell.

The material component of this spell is the cleric's holy symbol and two copper pieces.

Aspect

Level:	Cleric 6
Type:	Alteration
Range:	4"
Duration:	1 round/5 levels
Area of Effect:	cleric
Components:	V, S, M
Casting Time:	1 round
Saving Throw:	special.

When the cleric casts this spell she takes on an aspect of her god, a small sliver of their divine essence, for a short time. Anyone who attacks the cleric during this time has

the following odds of glimpsing this essence. The attacker is:

- Completely surprised 9 in 10
- Surprised 8 in 10
- Viewing cleric 6 in 10
- Attacking normally 5 in 10
- Looking away while attacking cleric 3 in 10

Looking away while attacking cleric gives a -4 to hit penalty. If the victim glimpses the essence they will be stunned for 1d3+1 rounds, no saving throw. Anyone not attacking but directly viewing the cleric must roll a save versus death magic or be stunned. The material component for this spell is the cleric's holy symbol and a handful of sand.

Knight of Majesty

Level:	Cleric 6
Type:	Alteration
Range:	0
Duration:	1 turn
Area of Effect:	cleric
Components:	V, S, M
Casting Time:	1 round
Saving Throw:	none

This spell transforms the cleric into a powerful avatar of their god. A pair of wings (feathered, bat wings, wings of fire, wings of smoke, whatever is appropriate to the deity in question) will appear and they will be covered in holy fire (smoke, lightning, etc. as appropriate to deity). The cleric will get a 3-point AC reduction, +2 to hit and +4 to damage on top of existing bonuses when using their primary weapon, and all saves are at +3. Their wings will give them a flying movement rate of 24" and a maneuverability class of A. Finally, once during the casting of the spell they may shout, causing all hostile creatures in a 3" radius to save versus spell or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. The material component of this spell is the cleric's holy symbol and a candle from his home temple, which must be lit and allowed to burn while casting the spell. Note that this spell may be cast on the cleric at most once per day.

Tulpa

Level:	Cleric 6
Type:	Evocation, Conjuration/Summoning
Range:	5" + 1"/level
Duration:	1 day
Area of Effect:	special
Components:	V, S, M
Casting Time:	1 hour
Saving Throw:	none

When a cleric casts a *Tulpa* spell they must prepare a special sacred space, either in their temple or by consecrating ground with holy water and incense. They must also take a strip from a piece of clothing that has been in contact with their body and wrap it around a stone. The cleric must meditate uninterrupted on that stone while in that space for an hour. During this time the cleric concentrates all their anger, rage, and aggression on the stone. At the end of the hour the cleric must save versus spell (Magical Attack Adjustment applies); if successful the stone will disappear and in its place will stand a *Tulpa*. The *Tulpa* is a manifestation of the cleric's righteous rage and anger. It can appear to be anything the cleric desires, but no matter what it looks like, it will have the following attributes:

AC 0; HP 5/level of cleric; MV 18"; # Att 3; Dam 2d4, 2d4, 2d4; SA hits as 8th level fighter, if 2 of the three attacks hit the *Tulpa* gets 3 more attacks, this can be repeated; SD saves as cleric, immune to fear/enchantment/charm.

The *Tulpa* must be directed against a particular foe and it will pursue that foe unceasingly until the spell duration is over; even the casting cleric only has a 5% chance per level of recalling a *Tulpa* once created.

Wand of Obliteration

This wand obliterates any type of writing, glyph, symbol, or rune at a range up to 30'. Mundane writing is automatically obliterated. Magical writings receive a saving throw vs. Disintegrate based upon the material they are written or inscribed on. Writings in the air require a 20 to save.

Each charge obliterates one page or item of similar size.

GP value 7,000; XP value 1,000

by Bryan Fazekas

Tactical Magic: Potions and Scrolls

by Ian Slater

"I want to make a potion."

It finally happened, after 30+ years of gaming I have a player of a magic-user (MU) that wants to MAKE STUFF.

To make this happen I flipped to the relevant section of the DMG and did some reading, and realized that there was some work to be done. Essentially the *AD&D Dungeon Masters Guide* (DMG) gives you an abstract system that makes the process time consuming and expensive. I present here a slightly less abstract system with a range of costs and I detail out one way that enterprising players could reduce those costs, and thus make it possible to do this sooner. Other than that, I bring together bits and pieces from the DMG in one place to make this a bit easier to see.

Potions

Alchemists and Laboratories

The DMG suggests that a magic-user can brew potions at 7th level if they have an alchemist to help them (if the MU is above 11th level the alchemist reduces time and cost by 50%). This will not be cheap (and I will use maximum costs in these calculations), according to the DMG:

> Alchemist ... Monthly Costs ... 300 gp
>
> Alchemist ... It will require an offer of 10 to 100 gold pieces bonus money, plus a well-stocked laboratory, plus the assurance of not less than a full year of employment, to attract one to service.
>
> Total costs:
>
> Full year of employment: 300x12 = 3600 GP + 100 GP bonus = 3700 GP. It is possible to role-play out the offer and determine if the NPC Alchemist will accept, or to roll an encounter reaction roll for this as well.

Now, note the reference to the "well-stocked laboratory"--that's where things get a bit more complicated.

The DMG then states:

> In order to begin manufacture of a potion (and they may be made only one at a time), the magic-user must have a proper laboratory with fireplace, workbench, brazier, and several dozen alembics, flasks, dishes, mortar and pestle, basins, jugs, retorts, measuring devices, scales, and so forth! Such implements are not easily obtained, being found only at alchemical shops or produced upon special orders by stone masons, potters, glass blowers, etc. Initial outlay for the creation of a workshop, assuming that the place already has a fireplace, would cost between 200 and 1,000 GP This cost is based on the relative availability of the tradesmen and goods necessary to complete the work room and stock it properly. The DM may certainly require a greater expenditure if the campaign has inflation and/or shortages. In addition, upkeep of the laboratory requires a further monthly outlay of 10% of the total cost of the place, exclusive of any special provisions or protections, in order to stock basic fuel and supplies, replace broken equipment, and so on when the laboratory is in use.

OK, so let's assume 1000gp to create the place (+100 gp for the fireplace), so 1100 gp (and 110gp/month maintenance costs). I assume that the maintenance costs include the cost of 1d4 men-at-arms to guard the place when the wizard is not around.

So the new total is:

3700 gp + 1100 gp = 4800 gp, add in say 110gp for a month of maintenance costs to start and you get approximately 5000 gp to get an alchemist and a laboratory.

Now, the one thing I didn't consider is time; assembling all the components and building a laboratory is bound to be time consuming. You can tag this at whatever time seems appropriate, but a month seems reasonable to me (with variations based on labor availability, etc.).

Next Step: Get To Work

The DMG recommends that, rather than coming up for separate formulae for every potion, you use the following abstract system:

> Both the cost in gold pieces and the days of compounding and infusing are determined by use of the experience points award (as shown on the list of magic items) amounts. If no experience points are shown, then the potion has a 200 GP base for cost and time determination. The point award for a given potion is also the amount of gold pieces the magic-user must pay in order to concoct the basic formula - with rare herbs and spices and even more exotic ingredients. The number of days required to brew the potion is the same figure, each hundred or fraction thereof indicating one full day of compounding time to manufacture the liquid, i.e., 250 XP = 250 GP basic costs and 3 full days of time.

I think that this is a good system--all it lacks is a determination of the time required to get the ingredients and a mechanism to reduce the costs.

On the first point, note a few of the "special" ingredients listed:

> **Potion of Diminution**: powdered kobold horn and wererat blood
>
> **Potion of ESP**: Mind flayer brain

I'm not sure about everyone else's campaign, but you don't find many places that sell fresh mind flayer brain anymore. The GP cost of the potion is supposed to include this, I assume, but I would rather attach a time to the process if the player is going to be purchasing these rare ingredients, as they should not be easy to find. To model this, I have come up with a table to determine how long it takes to get special ingredients and how much it costs.

Table A – Time Obtain Rare Components

d00	Component
1-25	found immediately
26-55	found in 1d6 days
56-80	found in 1d4 week
81-85	found in 1d3 month
86-00	unavailable

Cost

The cost of the component, in GP, is 1d4 * 50 per HD of the monster. E.g., for a 3 HD monster if a 2 is rolled the cost is: 2 *50 * 3 = 300 GP.

Notes

-1% for each point of charisma over 15 and -1% for every point of intelligence over 15

Each potion will require 1-3 "fantastic" components, though all can be sought after concurrently – e.g. if it took 1 week for one component, 2 days for another and 3 days for a third they could all be retrieved in a week.

Any component on the chart has a 2% chance of being spoiled despite the cost to obtain it. A purchaser can make a save versus spells upon purchasing, if the component is spoiled and the save is successful she has noticed the problem with the component.

Note that if you use this table then the costs listed override the costs listed in the DMG, e.g. the cost is not necessarily the equivalent of the XP value. Essentially you have to choose if you want to "hand wave" this part or not. Either the GP value that you pay (the listed XP value) represents the process of obtaining the ingredients with no time attached to it (e.g. it is assumed that the process happens when the player starts it, without using game time to get it done) or if you want to make the players work for their special ingredients, then roll on the table to determine time and cost.

On the Cheap!

For whatever reason your PC may not want to put out that kind of money to brew every potion, so there is another option: harvesting your ingredients while adventuring. PCs regularly slay monsters and leave them dead to rot, ignoring crucial parts that could be used to make magic items, to serve as material components in spells, etc.

However, if you find a pair of basilisk eyes they won't last long if you just drop them in your belt pouch, and extracting them might prove complicated, so both of these factors need to be considered.

So if the PC wishes to retrieve and store monstrous components for later use, she is required to do the following.

Table B. Tools for Extraction and Storage of Fantastic Components

A. Obtain a special set of vivisectionist's tools; a base set costs 300 gp. When an attempt is made to remove a component (e.g. extract the eyes of a basilisk, the heart of a chimera, etc.) a saving throw versus breath weapon must be made, with a dexterity modifier (e.g. defensive adjustment) and a modifier of +1 for every point of intelligence above 14. If the save is made the component has been removed successfully; if it is not made the component is destroyed in the extraction attempt. For every 100gp more than the base cost spent on the vivisection tools a +1 is added to the save (to a max of +4).

B. Obtain a special set of sealable metal containers to maintain the parts for transfer. Containers cost 500gp for 5, each is the size of a flagon of ale, and they have an encumbrance of 10gp each. Note that storage of components outside of such container but in a **Portable Hole/Leomund's Secret** Chest, etc. will only work if these extra-dimensional spaces are airless.

C. Store those components in a laboratory or pay to have the components permanently stored at the caster's guild/coven/church; base cost is 200gp/year, +50gp for components which must be dry, +100 gp for hot or cold. If stored in the PC's laboratory add 500gp for proper storage facilities to the base laboratory cost.

D. Each year in storage the components have a 5%-15% chance of spoiling.

Boil, Boil, Toil and Trouble ...

So you have the ingredients, you have the laboratory and the alchemist, and you have the time between adventures. It's time to brew up some potions!

The cost and time to gain the special ingredient is either the XP value in GP and no time to obtain, or the value listed in time and cost on table A. Once the ingredients are available, it takes 1 day (rounded up) for every 100XP of the XP value of the potion. So a potion worth 250 XP takes 3 days to brew.

There is no indication that there is any chance of failure for this, though there is this note under the "delusion" potion entry:

"... a 5% to 20% failure percentage can be assigned to all potion manufacture, and those which are failures become delusion potions of the sort which was being attempted, i.e., animal control, flying, etc."

So one possibility would be to assign say a 5% chance of failure for any potion, any roll of 01 would indicate a **Potion of Delusion**, a roll of 02 a **Potion of Poison**, and 3-5 a failed but harmless potion.

So take an example.

Grimtooth the Great, 7th level MU, has built a laboratory and found an alchemist; he paid the most possible due to local economic circumstances, and is 5000gp poorer. He decides to obtain his fantastic components (he rolls 1) from others, so he rolls on Table A. He gets:

Monstrous component (Pegasus feathers) found immediately, cost = 50 x HD of monster in GP (200 gp total). By the book it's the XP value of the potion in GP, so in this case BTB would be 500 gp to make the potion, by the table roll it was cheaper. But the table roll could also be more costly.

He then spends three uninterrupted days brewing and rolls the chance for spoiling (optional). He rolls an 08, which means the brewing was successful, and he is the proud owner of a *Potion of Flying* for the cost of 200 gp (and a small proportion of the lab + alchemist cost spread out over every potion that is made).

Huzzah!

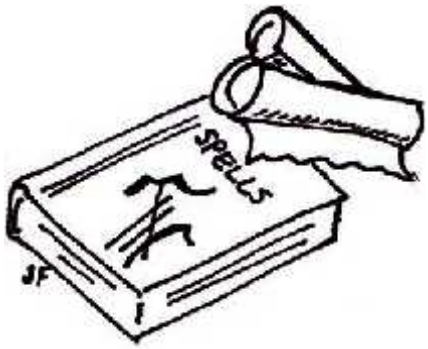
Scrolls

Scrolls get less attention than you would expect in 1e. Scrolls are the base of two very important things in the game, spells and magic items. According to the

admittedly schematic process outlined in the DMG for magic item creation, you use scroll spells to create magic items (e.g. a wand of lightning might require you to merge a scroll with lightning bolt to the wand with a wish). And scrolls are the source of most spells the players obtain in the game (that and spell books).

There are two reasons to have scroll scribing rules, for spell research and placing spells on to scrolls for later casting. We are interested only in the latter here.

The DMG states a few conditions for spell scribing:



Scrolls may be inscribed by characters of 7th level or higher.

The spells placed upon the scroll must be of a level which the inscribing character can cast.

Papyrus, parchment, or vellum must be used and better quality material improves chances of success.

A fresh quill from a magical creature must be used for every spell transcribed.

Ink is made of something like sepia from a giant squid or ink from a giant octopus, and "blood, powdered gems, herbal and spice infusions, draughts concocted from parts of monsters", etc.

It's worth quoting the example of a list of materials for a scroll of protection from petrification:

1 oz. giant squid sepia

1 basilisk eye

3 cockatrice feathers

1 scruple of venom from a medusa's snakes

1 large peridot, powdered

1 medium topaz, powdered

2 drams holy water

6 pumpkin seeds

Harvest the pumpkin in the dark of the moon and dry the seeds over a slow fire of sandalwood and horse dung. Select three perfect ones and grind them into a coarse meal, husks and all. Boil the basilisk eye and cockatrice feathers for exactly 5 minutes in a saline solution, drain, and place in a jar. Add the medusa's snake venom and gem powders. Allow to stand for 24 hours, stirring occasionally. Pour off liquid into bottle, add sepia and holy, water, mixing contents with a silver rod, stirring widdershins. Makes ink sufficient for one scroll."

One gets the impression that PC scroll scribing was being discouraged, as this seems rather involved for a game where abstraction is hailed as an ideal.

So I would suggest the following. First, determine how many fantastic ingredients are needed to make the ink for this particular spell inscription. Divide the spell level by two and round up, so a 3rd level spell would require 2 ingredients. Then add two to this number, to include the sepia for the ink and the special quill.

Roll on table A for each component to determine cost and time to obtain (or gather the components as you adventure).

Then add a flat amount for vellum/parchment costs and add 50gp per level of spell to represent costs of ground gems and valuable non-magical ingredients.

Once this is done transcription can happen. According to the DMG it takes a day for every level of spell to transcribe it. So a 5th level spell takes 5 days.

The DMG also states that "Time so spent must be continuous with interruptions only for rest, food, sleep, and the like. If the inscriber leaves the scroll to do anything else, the magic is broken, and the whole effort is for naught."

This point must be addressed. If the MU is doing this in a tower, a keep, a special location, you can just hand wave this. Otherwise some cost must be associated with being safe enough to spend days defenceless like this. Rather than detail this, I will only say that this is up to DM discretion, and if the player already has a stronghold or tower which is protected, then this will already be addressed. If not, the DM will have to figure in the possibility of interruption based on player preparation and other contextual factors.

Chance of failure when you write the scroll spell is 20% +1% per spell level –1% per level of inscriber.

And here's an interesting wrinkle if you want to put multiple spells on a scroll: a failure to scribe one means you can't add any more to the scroll, and 7 spells maximum to a scroll, BTB.

So take an example. Boondoggle the Bombastic, 13th level MU, wants to scribe a 5th level spell. That requires a total of 3 fantastic components. He has two in house and must obtain 3 others. He rolls on the table and the longest wait time he gets is a week, so he has everything he needs in 1 weeks' time. Each component is purchased; given that he needed components from monsters of 4, 6 and 12 HD, the costs are high, but with some forgiving rolls his total outlay is 4000 gp for ink, quill and fantastic ingredients. Vellum and non-magical ingredients run him another 300gp.

He has a 12% chance of failure, rolls a 16, and Boondoggle has *Cloudill* on a scroll, cost: 4300 gp and 5 days of protected inscription time (whatever you cost that out at).

The goal here is to make it possible to do this within reasonable time frames and with reasonable costs and chances of success. The fact that BTB potion brewing doesn't have a failure chance (there is an optional one listed) it is a good bet. Scroll scribing is more expensive, indeed if you decided the costs listed here were too dear, I would simply divide the cost multipliers on table 2 by 10, e.g. 5xHD of monster, rather than 50. If you feel them too cheap, then increase the multipliers by whatever factor seems appropriate for your campaign. The relative costs will remain the same, and the time factors will also stay the same.

Dog Collars, Magical

The dog is well known as "man's best friend" (although elves and halflings also have a long history of raising and training dogs), and they have been loyal companions in work, leisure and war. Not surprisingly, those with the financial means or magical ability have crafted a number of magic items for their loyal canine companions. While these magical collars only work on non-supernatural canines with an intelligence of Low or less (i.e. a stupid werewolf would not benefit from a magical collar), there are rumors that similar collars have been crafted that are capable of bestowing benefits on supernatural canines (such as hell-hounds, winter wolves, wolfweres, etc.).

Collar of Protection

This collar acts like a **Ring of Protection**, providing the dog with a bonus to its AC and saving throws.

1d12	Protection	XPV	GPV
1-9	+1	750	5,000
10-11	+2	1,250	8,000
12	+3	2,000	12,500

Collar of Savagery

This collar makes a dog fiercer and more dangerous. A dog wearing the collar of savagery gains a +1 bonus to strike and a +2 bonus to damage. It is also able to harm creatures as if it had 4+ Hit Dice, e.g., it can harm creatures only harmed by +1 or better weapons.

GP value 7,500; XP value 1,000

Collar of Loyalty

This collar makes the canine wearing it unshakably loyal to its master (i.e. the dog need never check morale), and it is immune to magical charm and fear effects.

GP value 5,000; XP value 750

Collar of Communication

This collar allows a canine to understand the commands given to it by its owner as if a *Speak With Animals* spell was in effect. The effect is only one way, e.g., he canine can understand its master, but no special ability for the master to understand the canine is imparted.

GP value 3,000; XP value 500

by Andrew Hamilton

The Brewmaster: Monsters As Playable Race

by Timothy Connolly

So, your DM suddenly says the following words to you. "We're starting a new campaign, in which everything from the monster books is allowable as a playable race. As for maximum height and width, we'll draw the line at umber hulk, but otherwise anything goes."

You could spend the next who-knows-how-many hours poring over the *AD&D Monster Manual*, *Monster Manual 2*, *Fiend Folio*, *Creature Catalogue*, and more ...

But in an effort to save you precious time, dear reader, here follows a list of ten favorite monsters, each of which is worthy of serious consideration, in alphabetical order (not in order of importance).

Banderlog (Monster Manual 2)

A simian creature with green skin and brown fur, whose missile weapon of choice is a coconut? If that doesn't pave the way for wild role-play, nothing will. An armor class of 6 (and a hit dice of 4) might not sound like much, but these creatures sport a halfway-decent intelligence, and it's great fun to consider what else they might use for missile weapons, once they've run out of coconuts to throw around.

Doppelganger (Monster Manual)

As if it weren't already enough fun to go around transforming into other living beings, up to as tall as 8 feet in height, the 4 hit dice doppelganger makes its saving throws as if it were a 10th level fighter. Go ahead and "become" the mayor of that town over there. Then "become" the innkeeper in that same town for a while. Then later on, go ahead and "become" the captain of the guard in that other town up the road. While you're at it, go ahead and "become" one of your party members. Never a dull moment.

Grey Slaad (Fiend Folio)

Planar travel at will is what makes this such an intriguing monster for a playable race. 10+6 hit dice (and 18/00 STR) is also nothing to sneeze at. Amongst slaadi, the grey slaadi are known as the executioners, and with good reason. When appearing on the prime material plane in human form, wearing no armor, they are at AC 1. They also wield swords which are +2 or better (and sometimes even a sword of sharpness). Other powers of theirs include cause fear, flame strike, invisibility, and power word: blind.

Lizard King (Fiend Folio)

Not to be confused with the frontman of The Doors who could "do anything", this creature holds sway over 10 to 100 loyal lizardman followers, all trying their able best to keep their leader satiated with a minimum of two human sacrifices per week. Of course there's also that (magical?) trident which skewers opponents, and deals double damage on hits which are five numbers above the required AC to hit, making it quite the formidable weapon.

Lupin (Creature Catalogue)

At a glance, this monster appears to be little more than a gnoll with a wolf's head instead of a hyena's head. Now, before you go thinking of the fate which befell Robb Stark, King of the North, consider this instead ... Lupins are of lawful alignment, and a vast majority of their time is spent above ground (as opposed to chaotic evil gnolls, who remain in their subterranean lairs 85% of the time). Werewolves are mortal enemies of the lupins, and lupins often wield silver weaponry. Lupins are also known to ride upon dire wolves. They charge into combat, astride their mounts, with silver-tipped lances. That's quite a visual. Let it sink in.

Pegataur (Creature Catalogue)

One part pegasus to one part centaur, as the name would suggest? Not exactly. One part pegasus and one part elf is a far more accurate assessment of the situation. If the source material is to be observed and upheld to the letter, pegataurs do not go traveling around with adventuring parties. That doesn't mean that lenient DMs won't find their way around this obstacle, in the name of fun. Pegataurs are friendly with pegasi, paving the way (and greasing the wheels) for pegasi in your adventures (always great fun). As for the weapon mastery which pegataurs have though, DMs may want to hand wave it (or limit it somehow), since it could potentially unbalance the game. Or just let your freak flag fly, baby! Pegataurs are still great fun either way. That's a promise.

Quickling (Monster Manual 2)

Just how quick is a quickling anyway? At a glance, three attacks per round isn't much to write home about. But, upon closer inspection of the stat block, a movement rate of 96" is the real indicator here. Their height of 2' is an ideal height for mischief. Their high-pitched speech at high speed is spectacular for role-play excitement.

Rakshasa (Monster Manual)

Keith Baker, of Eberron fame, certainly took rakshasa to the next level with his Lords of Dust, but it was Gary Gygax who first presented us with his somewhat rudimentary version of this lawful evil creature in 1977. What leaps at us first is their bipedal appearance, with the heads and the (upside-down) paws of the great cats. Their eating habits are disturbing, to say the least. And, their magic resistance is impressive (especially when spells under 8th level are involved). But, woe be unto the unsuspecting rakshasa who is struck by any crossbow bolts which have been blessed by a cleric. What ultimately makes this race so much fun to play though is their mastery of illusion, and their fondness for subterfuge.

Umpleby (Fiend Folio)

Eight feet in height + shaggy brown hair (a la Bigfoot) + electric shock powers + concealed netting projectile weapon + low intelligence + a penchant for being sneaky = a recipe for great fun. The umpleby also has the ability to detect precious metals and gems, up to a hundred feet away, even through solid rock. It also has an immunity to all forms of electric attack. Not too shabby.

Vampire (Monster Manual)

Also known as "fun with energy drain". And, as if their ability to turn into gaseous form (at will) wasn't impressive enough, their ability to regenerate 3 HP per round is a potential game-changer. We all know the downside to being a vampire (must avoid contact with sunlight, holy water, stakes through the heart, running water, strong garlic, crosses, et cetera). But think of the upside. There's plenty of it. And if you choose to play "a vampire from the eastern world", you'll have the added bonus of invisibility (at the cost of charm and gaseous form).

Gem of Scroll Reading

This small, whitish-translucent gem is greatly sought after by spell casters. The gem is 3 inches wide,1 inch tall, and 1/2 inch thick, with flat bottom and top. It is usable only by spell casters (cleric, druid, magic user, illusionist); if one side is placed against printed matter the gem makes the writing readable as if *Comprehend Languages* is cast. If placed upon a scroll or other magical writing, it acts as if *Read Magic* is cast as well.

Spells on unknown scrolls may be cast by reading through the gems. If the spell is within the caster's ability (same class, of a level the caster can normally use) the casting time is normal as is the chance of success. If the spell is above the caster's level there is a 5% chance per level of difference of spell failure, e.g., if a 9th level magic user tries to read a *Wish* spell (which is available at 18th level) there is a (18 - 9) * 5% = 45% chance of spell failure.

More startlingly, the caster may attempt to read scroll spells of other classes. The casting time is twice normal and there is a higher chance of spell failure. This chance is 10% + 5%/level of the level required to cast the spell. For example if a magic-user tries to read *Cure Light Wounds* (clerics gain at 1st level) there is a 10% + (5% * 1) = 15% chance of spell failure. If that magic-user tries to cast *Raise Dead* (clerics gain at 9th level) there is a 10% + (5% * 9) = 55% chance of spell failure. If there is a failure while reading a spell of a different class, the gem explodes and inflicts 2d4 hp of damage upon the reader, and they must save vs. Paralyzation for be blinded for 6d6 turns.

GP value 35,000; XP value 3,000

by Bryan Fazekas

One Page Dungeon: A Dire Need ...

by Ethan Sincox (The Immoral Chanticleer)

Good intentions have paved the way for unwelcome visitors

Townspeople are plagued by a pack of demonic black hounds. Over the last eight moon cycles, they've killed half the local farmers' livestock and three townspeople, including a small child. The town priest, Father Armbruster, claims it is punishment by the good gods because they've been forsaken. Others say they foretell the coming of Leptoris, a seldom-mentioned ancient god of the underworld. Whatever the reason for their existence, you have been hired to track the pack down and destroy it.

On the darkest and foggiest of nights, a long, sorrowful howling can sometimes be heard across the moors. The townspeople suggest that as a good place to start ...

Background

Father Armbruster was sent to replace the former priest, Father Bedard, who died unexpectedly during one of his walks through the moor. Unfortunately, none of the acolytes had been properly trained to take over his position, a tradition that had taken place for almost 500 years, and so the church had sent a young priest to take his place. While not exactly thriving, for years the little town has led a comfortable life without much strife or struggle. People were starting to think they didn't need to continue praying to the old gods, that they were taking care of themselves just fine. The death of Father Bedard, coupled with his replacement by a non-local, seemed to be all that was necessary to convince people to stop attending weekly services and, more importantly, to greatly reduce their patronage.

Faced with a dwindling congregation and with no strong personal influences over the locals, Father Armbruster seemed desperate for a way to drive the people back to church. He just wanted some way of scaring them a little, some way of putting the fear of the gods back into them. One evening, a stranger with a great hound appeared at the Father's door, begging a meal and a place to sleep. Over a dinner involving many drinks and a brief tour of the church and its local relics, the issue of his church troubles came up. The stranger offered a suggestion and a deal was made.

The stranger gave his hound to Father Armbruster. It was well-trained and he showed the Father how to control it. He could use the hound to scare the townsfolk. Sure, it might eat a chicken or lamb here and there, but it was a good dog and wouldn't hurt anyone. All he would take in exchange, oddly enough, was an object. Among the collection of church "relics" the Father had shown the stranger was a piece of broken bone with a hole roughly bored into it. The man now asked for the piece of bone. Father Armbruster couldn't think of any historical reference to it from a religious perspective and, having never received the oral history of the community from Father Bedard, had no idea of its value. He gave the bone to the stranger, who quickly disappeared into the night.

At first, Father Armbruster had things under control. He let the hound out once or twice a moon cycle, just to scare a few folks here and there. He was counting on the rumors he helped spread to convince them to return to his religious services. But his control only lasted a short while and one night the hound didn't return. That was when the howling started. The next time it was seen, it was accompanied by another. A few months later, there were three ...

Notes

This adventure is not a complete module or adventure – it's a well-formed idea for a short adventure or the start of something bigger. It is intentionally light on details to make it easier for DMs to fit it into their existing campaign, melding easily into the local geography, politics, and culture.

Three likely scenarios are:

1. The party is passing through the town and is told of the deaths and destruction, instigating them to investigate.

2. The townspeople specifically hire the party, or possibly several competing parties, to stop the deaths.

3. The party is sent by a local lord or public official to deal with the problem.

Leptoris is made up. I based it off of the Leptocyon, which is a forerunner of the dire wolf and the gray wolf.

Father Armbruster's name comes from the Armbruster's Wolf (Canis armbrusteri), of which the dire wolf is a direct descendent.

Dire Hound

Frequency:	Rare
No. Appearing:	2d6
Armor Class:	6
Move:	18"
Hit Dice:	3
% in Lair:	10%
Treasure Type:	Nil
No. of Attacks:	1
Damage/Attack:	2-8 (2d4)
Special Attacks:	Nil
Special Defenses:	Nil
Magic Resistance:	Standard
Intelligence:	Low (5-7)
Alignment:	Neutral Evil
Size:	M
Level/XP Value:	125

Dire hounds are a cross between the largest of wolfhounds and dire wolves, something that can only be accomplished with the aid of magic. They appear to be hounds, in many respects, except they always have charcoal black fur and burning red eyes. They are also much larger than a normal hound, averaging 42 inches in height at the shoulder and weighing over 120 lbs. The dire hound's low howl can carry for miles and, during the light of a full moon, can be used to call other dire hounds from the netherworld to join its pack. When this occurs, there is a 15% chance that 1d3 dire hounds will join up with the pack.

Dire hounds are often used by followers of Leptoris.

The Pipes of the Hound

The **Pipes of the Hound** is comprised of seven pieces of bone, woven together with sinew. Each piece of bone is of a different size than the others and each bone has one lone hole roughly bored into it. With a single piece of bone pipe, one can control a single dog or wolf. When two to six pieces of bone pipe of different sizes are assembled together, that control expands to two additional animals for each additional piece of bone (up to a maximum of 13 dogs or wolves). When fully assembled and played, the Pipes give the owner control over any dog or wolf within hearing distance. Though a complete set of the Pipes of the Hound has not been seen in recorded history, several partial sets are rumoured to be in existence. If a set of pipes is assembled and contains more than one bone of the same size, all dogs and wolves within hearing distance will immediately turn on the person playing them.

XP value 200 (one pipe), 2,000 (complete set)

Terror Blade, Broadsword +2

In addition to a +2 bonus to hit and damage, this blade has two magical powers related to the fearsome aura radiated by the blade. First, on a natural 20, the target must save vs. spells (at a -2 penalty) or be subject to fear as per the *Fear* spell. Secondly, any forces facing the blade in melee combat suffer a -5% penalty to any morale checks that they must make.

GP value 7,000; Xp value 1,000

Glorytongue, Long Sword +3

This magical long sword is a Holy Weapon (as per the paladin class description), but may be used by any good aligned character. In the hands of a good character, the weapon acts as a +2 weapon and when drawn it sounds an inspiring melody that heartens and inspires the wielder's allies (as per the bard's power). In a paladin's hands, the weapon functions as a +3 weapon, in addition to the musical powers and the normal benefits a paladin gains when wielding a holy sword.

Whip of Agony

This whip is a +2 weapon, made of a material that is extremely hard to cut, AC -6, must be dealt 27 hp in a single blow to sever. While it is an effective melee weapon, the whip's most potent power is the ability to deliver a magical wave of wracking, searing pain that immobilizes a victim. On a natural 20, the target must save vs. spells of be affected as if by a *Symbol of Agony*.

GP value 20,000; XP value 1,800

by Andrew Hamilton

Mini-Adventure: The Monoliths

by Andrew Hamilton

The encounter location described in this work is a potentially deadly one, particularly if PCs are unprepared for the results if they break the curse. This adventure is recommended for parties of 8th to 12th level. While the encounter can be played up as a straightforward combat encounter, there is also the opportunity for role-playing, and the accepting and/or granting of favors between mortals and fae (which can lead to all kinds of future trouble).

Author's Note: *Anyone with anything more than a passing knowledge of the real-world mythologies with a strong "fae" element are likely to cringe with mental agony when they read this, and see what I've done to that mythology (both knowingly and unwittingly). First, I don't claim to be an expert on any of this mythology. My accumulated knowledge is based on suspect sources, like* D&D *sourcebooks,* The Dresden Files, *and similar highly entertaining material.*

Second, I'm quite aware of the patchwork, misleading, and completely chaotic take I have on the Seelie and Unseelie Courts. This works for me as in my campaign the faerie courts are a distant force, incomprehensible to humanity & mortals. It's also a force (or more accurately a large group of magically capable and capricious individuals) that likes to meddle in the affairs of mortals, often out of boredom. By being inconsistent and overly inclusive with my definition of "fae" it makes it easier for me to create an environment that keeps players on their toes.

Third, I'm sure that the limited Irish/Gaelic that I tried to use is completely wrong, and means something completely different than I hope it does. However, the power of Google and on-line dictionaries cries out to be abused. Occasionally, I answer that call.

Last – and a shameless plug to increase our download counts – & Magazine *issues #9 and #10 contain one take on the Faerie Realm and Greater Fae. And yes, I know this deviates from some of the content of those articles. I* ***never*** *claimed to be consistent.*

Introduction

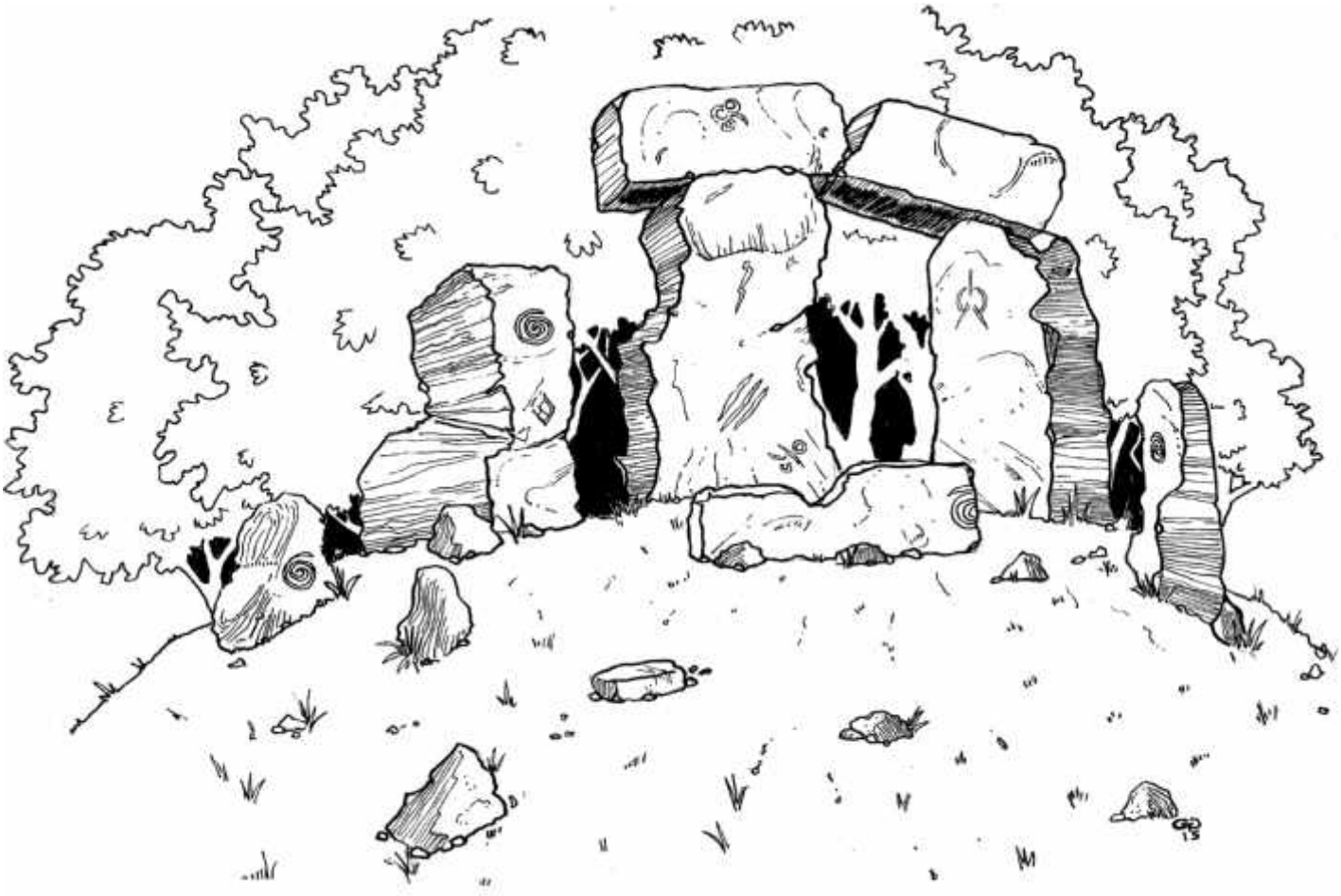
As long as anyone in the region can remember, there have been monoliths in the Green Run, and not even the druids know exactly what they are. The monoliths are 14 massive stone blocks scattered about a 2 acre area around a small, spring-fed pond. The blocks are each roughly 6' by 6' square at the base, and stand about 15' tall (over 40 tons each). The blocks are made of stone not common to the area, devoid of any markings or engraving, and despite their age, they do not seem to weather. The monoliths are fantastically hard, not even a pick or magical dagger will scratch them, and spells such as *Lightning Bolt*, *Acid Arrow*, *Dig*, *Transmute Rock To Mud* and *Disintegrate* have no effect on them.

Background

These 14 large stone monoliths are actually fomorian giants. Many centuries ago when the mortal and faerie realms were more closely intertwined and overlapping than they are at present, these fomorians served as foot soldiers and vassals of a powerful Unseelie Lord, the Lord of Nightwhisper Hollow. Lord Nightwhisper was involved in a long and violent dispute with a Seelie Prince, The Prince of Morningbright Rise.

Lord Nightwhisper used his fomorian foot soldiers to destroy the mortal vassals of Prince Morningbright. The fomorians made their lair in a cave, adjacent to a spring-fed pool. Despite their unnatural ugliness, the natural beauty of the place appealed to them. Of course, their evil nature compelled them to seize the cave from a water spirit that dwelt here (a nereid) and bring death to many of the fae and sylvan creatures in near proximity. Exhausting opportunities for local violence, the giants marched upon a druidic Circle and a human community governed by a Changeling. The fae, the druids, and the Changeling were all vassals of Lord Morningbright. The attacks were devastating, less because of the harm done to the living than the fact that Lord Morningbright had sworn an oath to protect his vassals.

A coward, Lord Morningbright was unwilling to face either the fomorians or Lord Nightwhisper on his own. Instead, he called in a favor from another, lesser, member of the Seelie Court. This minor lordling (an accomplished trickster named Relios) was a fickle and not necessarily willing ally of Prince Morningbright.



However, the network of duties, obligations and laws of the Faerie Nobility bound Relios to obey Prince Morningbright. He concocted a plan to defeat the fomorians, by placing a curse upon their drinking water. The curse worked to turn any creature that drank from the pond between sunrise and sunset on the Summer Solstice to stone when the sun set. This faerie knew that the fomorians had prisoners who drank from the pond, and that the curse would also turn the prisoners to stone. The curse would allow Relios to keep his word, and at the same time poke his erstwhile "Liege-Lord" in the eye with some unintended consequences.

Using The Monoliths In Campaign Play

The Monoliths are a feature well known to hunters, druids, and adventurers. The pond is used as a camp site and the monoliths are used as a landmark. A few magic-users and druids have tried to divine the nature of the monoliths without success (due to a misdirection effect of the curse). While mortals do not know the history of the Monoliths, the same is not true of the faeries in the region (although they are unlikely to share the truth with a mortal). The faeries are bound (by the strange laws of the Seelie and Unseelie Courts) to not tamper with the Monoliths.

There are several ways to involve the Monoliths in play, including:

1) The PCs might use the pond as a camp site during some journey. There is a possibility that inquisitive PCs will inadvertently break the curse.

2) An evil faerie might try and manipulate the PCs into breaking the curse. This might be simply to cause a little chaos, or to use the sudden appearance of 14 angry giants as a distraction to escape angry PCs.

3) An evil faerie might try and manipulate some other agent or dupe into breaking the curse. A good faerie (or even an evil faerie who is a rival of the other faerie) might enlist the PCs in an effort to foil this plot.

4) An enemy of the PCs discovers the secret of the Monoliths. Fleeing the PCs after a defeat, that enemy frees the fomorians in the hope he or she can gain them as allies (or at least direct them against the PCs).

5) Someone or something unwittingly breaks the curse, freeing a band of bloodthirsty fomorians on the region.

The Spring & Surroundings Now

After many years of erosion, the cave entrance has collapsed under the weight of the trees that grew above. The regrowth has hidden the entrance from casual (or even determined) observers. Unless one uses magic, speaks with burrowing animals (such as the voles and mice that live around the pond), or digs where the spring emerges from the hillside, the cave remains unfound.

There are fourteen monoliths scattered about:

- one toppled over in the pool (the witch)
- two standing in the creek south of the pool
- two on opposite shores of the pool
- four clustered together on the rocky outcropping overlooking the pool
- two standing 10' feet apart from each other about 100' northeast of the pool
- two leaning against each other (these fomorians were wrestling with each other when the curse took hold) southwest of the pool
- one 50' east of the pool (this is the shaman, who was looking west, watching the sun set)

At the bottom of the pool near the inlet, covered in a layer of silt, is a feather made of green stone. The feather is beautiful, with the most remarkable craftsmanship (it's actually a cockatrice feather, petrified and subjected to other enchantments). The feather is the physical anchor of the curse, and it radiates alteration magic (which will allow a *Detect Magic* spell or similar power to locate the feather). The feather is quite brittle, by design (as the faerie hoped that the curse would not be long lasting, another planned slight to his "master"). The feather saves as glass, at a -3 penalty, so any rough handling (such as snatching it from the bottom of the pool) is likely to break it.

Breaking The Curse

All that is required to break the faerie curse is to break the stone feather. Alternate means of breaking the curse include casting a *Dispel Magic* on the pond (but not a monolith), casting *Remove Curse* on any of the stone blocks, bringing a monolith or the feather into an *Anti-Magic Shell*, or casting a *Mordenkainen's Disjunction* on either a monolith or the feather.

When the curse is broken the fomorians are instantly released, alert and angry (they were dimly aware of what transpired). The PCs probably have a fight on their hands unless they can do some very fast talking.

The Fomorians

Fomorian Foot Soldier (x 10) (AC 3, MV 9", HD 13 + 1-3, hp 54 to 66, Atts 1, Dmg 4d8, SA surprise bonus (+1 to +3, depending on terrain), SD immune to surprise, MR Standard, Int Average, AL NE, Size L (13 to 15' tall), XPV 2,750 + 18 xp/hp)

(Six males and four females, these brutes are muscle, pure & simple, and there is no difference between the genders in combat. They fight anything they are pointed at, and fight amongst themselves if there is no one else to fight.)

Fomorian Sub-Chief (x 1) (AC 0, MV 9", HD 13 + 1-3, hp 80, Atts 1, Dmg 4d8+2, SA surprise bonus (+1 to +3, depending on terrain), SD immune to surprise, MR Standard, Int Average, AL NE, Size L (15' tall), XPV 5,140)

(The fomorian sub-chief wears armor made of several layers of bear and bison hide, and has shields lashed to his arms as bracers (one is a **shield +3**), and he carries a massive oaken cudgel with long and short sword blades driven through it as spikes.)

Fomorian Chief (x 1) (AC -1, MV 9", HD 13 + 1-3, hp 94, Atts 1, Dmg 5d8+5 SA magical club, surprise bonus (+1 to +3, depending on terrain), SD immune to surprise, MR Standard, Int Average, AL NE, Size L (16' tall), XPV 6,342)

(This brute stands 16' tall, has three eyes, a mouth on the left side of his face with ragged fangs protruding from it, and wears a shirt made of shields laced together like scale mail. He has a massive oaken club named ***Darach Caor Thine***. The club is 6' long, the handle is 6" in diameter and the head of the club is 18" in diameter, and the whole thing is wrapped with bands of cold iron and weighs 250 lbs. ***Darach Caor Thine*** is a **Club +2** and on a natural 20 a massive thunderclap is heard and the target is affected as if they were subjected to a *Power Word Stun* spell. The Chieftain is brave, but not reckless, and he will flee if he is clearly outmatched in a fight, leaving his followers to delay pursuit.)

Fomorian Giantess Witch* (x 1) (3rd level) (AC 3, MV 9", HD 13 + 2, hp 61, Atts 1, Dmg 4d8, SA surprise bonus (+1 to +3, depending on terrain), spells, SD immune to surprise, spells, MR Standard, Int Very (14), AL NE, Size L (13 to 15' tall), XPV 5,048) Memorized spells include (2/1) *Faerie Fire, Give Wounds; Hold Person*)

** this is the witch class from Dragon #114; as it is an NPC class I'm fairly generous as to which races can practice witchcraft in my campaigns*

The fomorian witch has done a great job of using her feminine wiles to co-opt the fomorian chief, despite the shaman's concerns. She is not loyal to Lord Nightwhisper, instead serving a different faerie noble in the Court of Darkness. Her ultimate goal was to bring the fomorians into service of her Lady, in exchange for a reward of great power and "beauty". She would be quite willing to bargain with the PCs, and would be happy to exchange non-aggression for a future favor, or a favor for her mistress. She is sneaky, crafty, and vicious when called for, and smart enough not to get into a losing fight.

Fomorian Shaman (x 1) (6th level) (AC 3, MV 9", HD 13d8 + 5d4 + 1-3, hp 80, Atts 1, Dmg 4d8, SA surprise bonus (+1 to +3, depending on terrain), spells, SD immune to surprise, spells, MR Standard, Int Very, AL NE, Size L (13 to 15' tall), XPV 6,850) Memorized spells include (3/3/2) *Cause Fear, Command, Curse; Aid, Augury, Hold Person; Dispel Magic, Prayer*

The shaman and the witch are rivals, and the shaman continually fears for his life, aware that the witch has somehow charmed the chieftain. The shaman is loyal to Lord Nightwhisper (from whom he derives his powers), and suspects that the witch is plotting against him. The shaman would not be opposed to a bargain that saw the witch removed (and the chieftain as well, as the sub-chief is more pliable). While the shaman is a little more controlled than the rest of the fomorians (partially due to fear of his master, Lord Nightwhisper), he is still vicious and cruel; he's just more willing to play a long game than get right to the looting, killing and torture than the rest of the giants.

The Cave & Cauldron

The fomorian giants are ruthless, with a taste for human flesh (although they aren't picky eaters). However, they are also lazy, and had bullied a greenhag into being their "housekeeper". The cave is a large hollow, with fifteen piles of sleeping furs as beds, a cook fire in the centre of the cave with a massive cauldron hanging over it, and several manacles bolted to one wall. One prisoner (a young man) is chained there, and a large leather bag, tied shut with twisted wire, is tossed against the wall beside the prisoner (the bag contains 3 pixies).

As the prisoners and the "housekeeper" all drank water from the pool, they were all subject to the curse as well, and if the cave is discovered and explored before the curse is broken, adventurers will find 2 large stone blocks (the greenhag and firbolg) and a bag with three melon sized rocks in it (the pixies). If the curse has been broken, the "housekeeper" and prisoners will have been restored to their true forms. The greenhag and firbolg will be somewhat bewildered, as the cave entrance will seem to have soundlessly and instantaneously collapsed, and the interior become dust covered and aged.

Greenhag (x 1) (AC -2, MV 12"//12", HD 9, hp 43, Atts 2, Dmg 1d2+2/1d2+6, SA surprise 5 in 6, move silently & hide 90% each, mimicry, spell-like abilities, SD surprised 1 in 20, MR 35%, Int Very, AL NE, Size M, XPV 2,516) (1/round at the 9th level of ability the hag may use: *Audible Glamer, Dancing Lights, Invisibility, Pass Without Trace, Change Self, Speak With Monsters, Water Breathing, Weakness*)

The hag hates her forced servitude, and would dearly love to see the fomorians get what's coming to them. However, she is wary of Lord Nightshadow and his power, and completely terrified of the Lord's Consort, whom she refers to as "The Dark Mistress". If the PCs have defeated the fomorians, the hag might flee, or she might try and take the PCs unawares and flee to Nightwhisper Hollow (see below). If the PCs are captured by the fomorians, she might strike a bargain to help free the PCs, in exchange for a number of favors of course.)

Firbolg Youth (x 1) (AC 2, MV 15", HD 13 + 2-7, hp 54, Atts 1, Dmg by weapon (double base damage) +10 (strength), SA spell-like abilities, SD bat away missiles (75%), spell-like abilities, MR 15%, Int Average, AL N (CG), Size L, XPV 3,650 + 18 xp/hp) (spell-like abilities include *Detect Magic, Diminution* as potion (double effect and double maximum duration), *Fools' Gold, Forget, And Alter Self*; each usable once per day

This poor fellow was sent by a lesser noble (or knight) of the Seelie Court, a distant cousin of Lord Morningbright, to see what the ruckus was. With youthful overconfidence he wandered right into a fomorian ambush, and was taken captive. If PCs bargain with him before freeing him, they may extract a promise or service from him. If they just free him, he will still owe them a return obligation – which he may try and discharge quietly by handing them something they ask for, etc. His weapons and armor are long gone, tossed aside when he was taken captive; he will seek to re-equip himself with appropriate equipment at the first opportunity.

Pixies (x 3) (AC 5, MV 6"/12", HD ½, hp 3 each, Atts 1, Dmg by weapon type, SA +4 to hit, sleep or forget poison on arrows, spell-like abilities, SD naturally invisible,

spell-like abilities, MR 25%, Int Exceptional, AL N, Size S, XPV 108 each) (spell-like abilities include become visible at will, polymorph self at will, illusions (1/day), confusion (by touch), dispel magic (1/day), dancing lights (1/day), and ESP (1/day).

These creatures tried to prank the fomorian shaman, and learned that faerie magic, even that used by giants, and specifically "hold person" spells, works on faeries as well as mortals. They are currently unarmed, quite miserable, and desperate to escape. Two of the pixies have damaged wings and are unable to fly. If freed, they will be condescendingly thankful, and then walk away, dragging their injured wings, with as much dignity as a pixie can show. PCs who are respectful and considerate might be able to get on the pixies' good side and extract some future favors, particularly if the PCs can heal the pixies' damaged wings.

The fomorians gathered a large treasure hoard. The treasure is hidden in a niche behind a large rock (requiring 36 Strength points to move). The treasure is kept in large leather bags, and includes 11,000 sp, 13,000 ep, 12,000 gp, 43 gems (11 – 10 gpv stones, 13 – 50 gpv gems, 7 – 100 gpv gems, 8 – 500 gpv gems, 3 – 1,000 gp gems and 1 – 5,000 gpv gem), two silver goblets (300 gpv each) and two golden plates (800 gpv each). There is also a large pottery flask which contains 2 doses of a **Potion Of Extra Healing**, and the rope used to tie one of the sacks shut is a **Rope Of Climbing**.

The Nighthollow Tunnel

The back of the cave has a narrow tunnel (by fomorian standards--it's actually 8' wide) that disappears into inky blackness. This is actually a Way, a passage between the Unseelie Realm (the Otherworld) and the Mortal Realm. Lord Nightshadow will sense the awakening of his vassals, and send an emissary, The Tracker, through the Way to instruct the fomorians to return to Nightwhisper Hollow. The emissary will arrive at first dusk following the breaking of the curse with a pack of shadow mastiffs accompanying him as hunting hounds. If he is unable to find the fomorians, or finds them dead, he will attempt to track any witnesses and interrogate them (possibly taking a witness back to Nightwhisper Hollow, rather than return empty-handed).

Tracker (1) (AC 2, MV 15", HD 7+7, hp 46, Atts 2 +1 (weapons & goring), Dmg 1d8+4 (x2, spear), 2d4+2 (goring), SA charge, spell-like abilities, surprise 3 in 6, SD spell-like abilities, surprised on 1 in 12, MR 20%, Int Very, AL NE, Size M, XPV 1,635) At will at the 9th level of effect the emissary may *Alter Self, Change Self, Invisibility, Pass Without Trace, Speak With Animals, Spook. T*wice per day at the 9th level of effect he may *Cause Fear* (as the 4th level spell), *Entangle, Slow, Haste*. The Tracker is able to track prey as if he were a 10th level ranger. Note, the Tracker is essentially a Greater Fae Knight, as described in *& Magazine* issue #9.

The Tracker appears as a tall elf (7' tall) with a whip-thin build and fine fur across his entire body, dressed in hunter's garb. Often he uses alter self to grow stag's antlers, which he can use in combat to gore an opponent. The Tracker is aware that this makes him resemble the master of the Wild Hunt, and he takes pleasure in the deception. He carries a magical spear (*Sleádilis,* a **Spear +2**), which returns to his hand when thrown (instantly after striking a target or other object, or the ground). If he charges an opponent, he strikes at +3 to hit with both his spear and antlers, and causes double damage with each. The Tracker is strong (Str 18), fast (Dexterity 18), and tough (Constitution 15), but far from foolish (Int 13 and Wisdom 15) and willing to flee from a fight he cannot win. In battle, he will stand back, directing his hounds to overwhelm spell casters, throwing his spear (twice a round) at magic-users, clerics, or fighters (in that order). He uses his magical abilities intelligently, and may *haste* his hounds, *slow* enemy warriors, use *invisibility* to flee, etc.

Shadow Mastiffs (x 16) (AC 6, MV 18", HD 4, hp 15 to 22, Atts 1, Dmg 2d4, SA baying causes panic, SD hide in shadows, MR Standard, Int Semi, AL N(E), Size M, XPV 185 + 4xp/hp)

Loose Ends

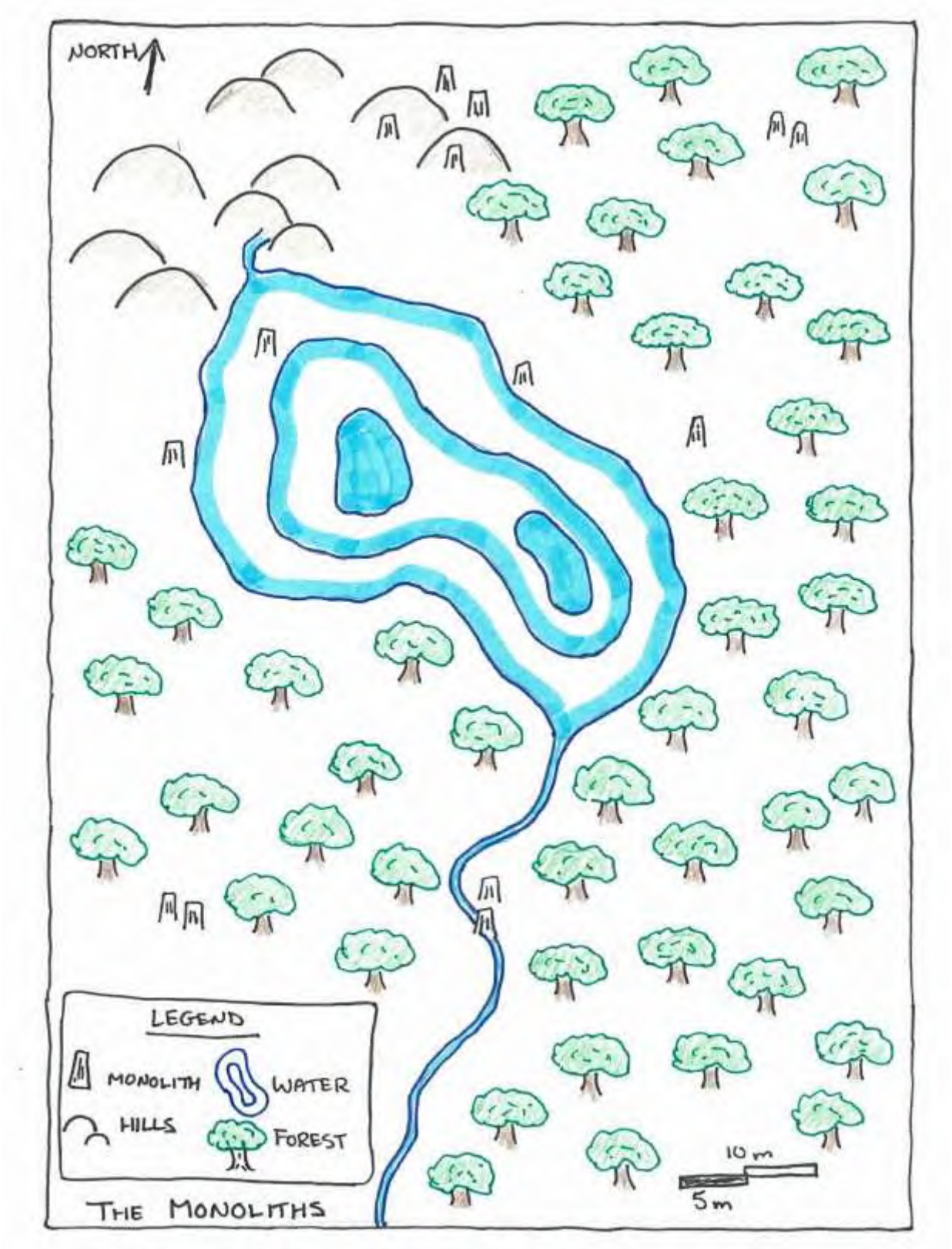
Any surviving fomorians may be a threat to local residents, unless Lord Nightwhisper gathers up the giants and takes them back to the Otherworld.

The PCs will have caught the attention of at least one faerie noble, perhaps more. If the PCs are lucky, the attention will be fleeting. If they are unlucky, the attention may be a little more focused (perhaps Lord Nightwhisper demands weregild for the death of any of his fomorian servants).

Brave (or foolish) adventurers might decide to travel through the Way into Nightwhisper Hollow. They will find that this portion of the Unseelie Court is a beautiful, park-like forest in perpetual twilight. They will also find that dangerous creatures hunt these woods, and the faeries that frolic here are unpredictable and often malign.

An open Way is certainly problematic. The Emissary and his mastiffs may return to hunt in the mortal realm, or even worse may come through. Good aligned PCs may recognize the danger of an open Way, and seek to find a means to close it.

The prisoners are all stuck in a strange world. Any of them might ally with the PCs, even temporarily, as they sort out what's what in this new home of theirs. The firbolg and pixies can return to the Otherworld (although they will not use the Way that leads to Nightwhisper Hollow), or they can choose to stay.



Hex Crawls:
North Hills and Northride Regions

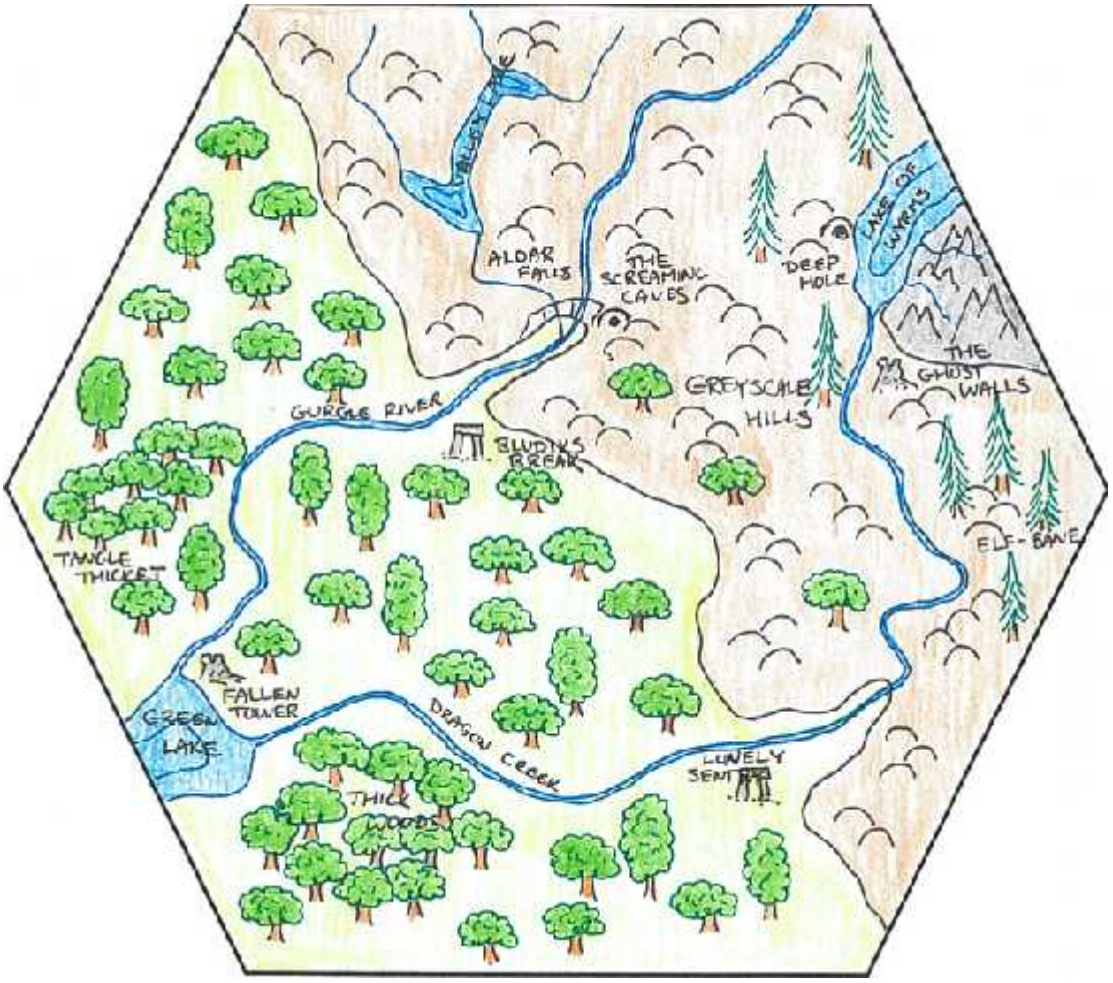
by Andrew Hamilton

What is a "hex crawl"? It is a section of terrain, a hexogonal area 24 miles (38.6 km) across. Taken from the author's campaign world, each hex crawl is fleshed out to give a dungeon master a starting point. Climate, topography, flora, fauna, inhabitants, and features of interest are noted.

What isn't included? NPCs, monsters, encounters. Each hex has background fleshed out, giving the DM a place to start and (hopefully) some inspiration to produce scenarios that fit their world view far better than someone else's generic encounter.

scale: 24 mile hex

North Hills Region



Climate

Temperate, with deep snows in the winter, rains in the late spring and early summer and a dry autumn. The northern hills and eastern mountains in particular receive heavy snow falls, often 3 to 4 times as much snow as the valley receives. The northern hills have an elevation of 4,000 to 4,200 feet above sea level (sloping south and west the forests that are 3,500 feet above sea level oat the toe of the hills, and gently grading to 3,300 feet above sea level in the west along the shores of Green Lake. The Dragonmounts, the mountains along the eastern edge of the region, reach elevations as high as 8,500 feet above sea level at the peaks, but the valleys are 5,000 to 5,500 feet above sea level.

Terrain/Topography

The eastern half of the North Hills region is dominated by the rugged Greyscale Hills, which are the foothills of the Dragonmount mountain range. The valley floor to the west and south is forested, with a slight south-west slope.

The Lake of Wyrms is located at the base of the Dragonmounts, at the foot of the mountain known as Fang Point. It is drained by Dragon Creek (about 25' wide and up to 8' deep, characterized by clear, cold water flowing over a rough, rocky bottom; there are many rapids along the creek) which flows south then west into Green Lake. The Lake of Wyrms is extremely deep (well over 300' deep in places) and very cold; even in summer those who swim in its waters are likely to suffer from hypothermia.

Green Lake is a large, deep lake on the western edge of the region. Well over 100' deep and the largest lake in the region, Green Lake is known as a productive fishery, full of trout and whitefish. The lake is a popular hunting and camping destination for travelers and residents of the community of Northride (located less than a day's travel to the west of the region).

Valley Lake is a narrow lake, the flooded junction of three valleys. It is quite deep (over 200' in places), despite being very narrow, and is well stocked with trout, grayling, and whitefish. Despite its depth, it gets surprisingly warm in the summers, being in a natural heat trap. Several small unnamed creeks (or at least the creeks have no names anyone can agree upon) flow into Valley Lake; it is drained by the very small and short creek known as Short Creek.

The Gurgle River (which is about 30' to 40' wide, but no more than 5' deep, and often shallow enough that child could wade across it) flows over Aldar Falls, and into Green Lake. Short Creek also flows over the cliffs at Aldar Falls, making an impressive natural spectacle.

Flora

The North Hills region is forested, although the valley forests are much different than the hill forests. The valley is primarily open, park-like hardwood forests (oak, maple, aspen, with birch, willows and alder along the watercourses). There is little underbrush, making it easy to move through these forests on horseback. The forests in the foothills are denser, thicker tangled coniferous forests (mostly gnarly pine and stunted spruce trees). Moving through this region is hard on foot, and nearly impossible on horseback. The hill tops and some of the southern faces of the hills are so wind and weather exposed that the trees growing here are often mistaken for wiry shrubs.

Fauna

Deer are the most common large fauna in the region, although elk are found in the hills, moose follow the creeks, and forage in ponds. Bears are common (primarily little black bears in the valley forests, and some grizzlies in the mountains). The primary predators are wolf packs, although mountain lions, cave lions, and cave bears are not uncommon. Occasionally griffons, and even dragons, will fly across the region hunting. Giant porcupines and giant skunks can also be found foraging in the forests here.

Land Use

The North Hills region is wilderness; other than a little hunting no industry takes place here (no even logging or timber harvesting).

Inhabitants

There are no known permanent communities or settlements in this region. Hunters, druids and gnolls pass through the region, camping for a while but without establishing permanent residences. In the past a werewolf pack hunted through this region, and presumably had a lair; however the druids and rangers that tracked down and killed the werewolves never found a lair or dwellings.

Communities and Economy

None.

Features of Note

Tangle Thicket is known as home to stirges and monstrous spiders. It is known as a place best avoided, although the stirge population booms every decade or so, and the rulers of Northride (to the west) place a bounty on stirges to motivate adventurers to thin the population. It is rumored that a fallen elven citadel is located within the Thicket; skeptics point out that the Thicket isn't that large and enough adventurers have stomped through hunting stirges that any ruins would have been found by now.

The Elf Bane is an evil stretch of forest that seems to be over-run by needlemen and living trees of malevolent intent. Even druids avoid the place, which they report as being under the sway of a massive treant descended from pine tree stock. Any elf entering the place will almost

immediately find themselves being hunted by needlemen with murderous intent; hence the place's name. There is some speculation that some fell power or device must reside here to have twisted a treant from good to evil.

The Screaming Caves were once a stronghold of an evil cult. The caves gained their name from the screams of the captives tortured and killed by the evil priests. The place was cleared out by paladins and fighting clerics before the Shattering, but every generation a new evil seems to re-establish here.

The Deep Hole is a cave complex that was once a stronghold of a huge goblin tribe. The goblins were wiped out by dwarves, one of whom named the caves when he commented (after a year of fighting and tunnel crawling) that "that's a deep hole". The tunnels connect with deeper caves, and the dwarves were never certain that they dug out all of the goblins. A few neophyte adventuring bands have sought out the place and failed to return; whether they fell victim to something in The Deep Hole, or predators on the trail there is unknown.

The Ghost Walls are a fallen fortress, reduced to rubble, and haunted by the spirits of the soldiers that died in its defence (or so the legends say). It is avoided on general principle, and the few adventuring bands that have sought the place out claim that they found nothing, neither monster nor treasure. Of course, there was some reason an attacking force felt the need to level the fortifications, so there may be some undiscovered secrets within the ruins.

The Lonely Sentry is a massive stone (likely a glacial erratic, but shaped by man or dwarf to be more of a block or tower) towering 50' high and 20' x 15' on the top. The remains of a wooden ramp can be found on the back (west) side; this was once used as a watch post.

Bludick's Break is a series of stone blocks (each about set in the ground, about 3' wide and 5' high), numbering nearly 150, spaced 20' to 30' apart that form a "wall" or break; half are on the south side of the river, the other half on the north side. This was built by a legendary (mythical?) war-chief named Bludick who used this as an anchor to let his archers and other troops take cover and hold back a humanoid invasion (before the founding of the Three Kingdoms).

The majestic Aldar Falls are rumored to conceal a cave or series of caves. The legends and tall tales associated with these caves are many and varied. Depending on which tale one listens to, these caves were once used by smugglers, warriors intent on bringing about the downfall of the Three Kingdoms, evil demon-worshipping cults, dragons, creatures from the Lightless Depths, nymphs and sirines, and so on. Whether there is truth to any of these remains to be discovered by adventurous individuals.

The Lake of Wyrms is rumored to be home to a sea dragon (to which more than one seasoned adventurer has pointed out that a sea monster belongs in a sea, not a lake, and this is probably just an old adventurers' version of a fish tale). Of course, no one has gone searching the depths of the Lake to disprove the tales.

The Fallen Tower is actually a fallen tower. The tower was probably 60' in diameter and 100 to 120' tall. It has toppled to the north-north-west; and adventurers claim that a trap-infested dungeon underlies the ruins. No one seems to know who built the tower, or who toppled it.

Northride Region

Climate

Temperate, with deep snows in the winter, rains in the late spring and early summer and a dry autumn. The region generally slopes to the south and west. The northern forests are 3,300 feet above sea level, descending to 3,200 feet above sea level in the south (although the Bulwark Hills, at 3,700 feet above sea level represent a divide between the Sorrow Creek watershed and the Greenwater River watershed to the south. The Ringe Hills (in the west) are 3,900 feet above sea level in the north, and 3,400 feet above sea level in the south.

Terrain/Topography

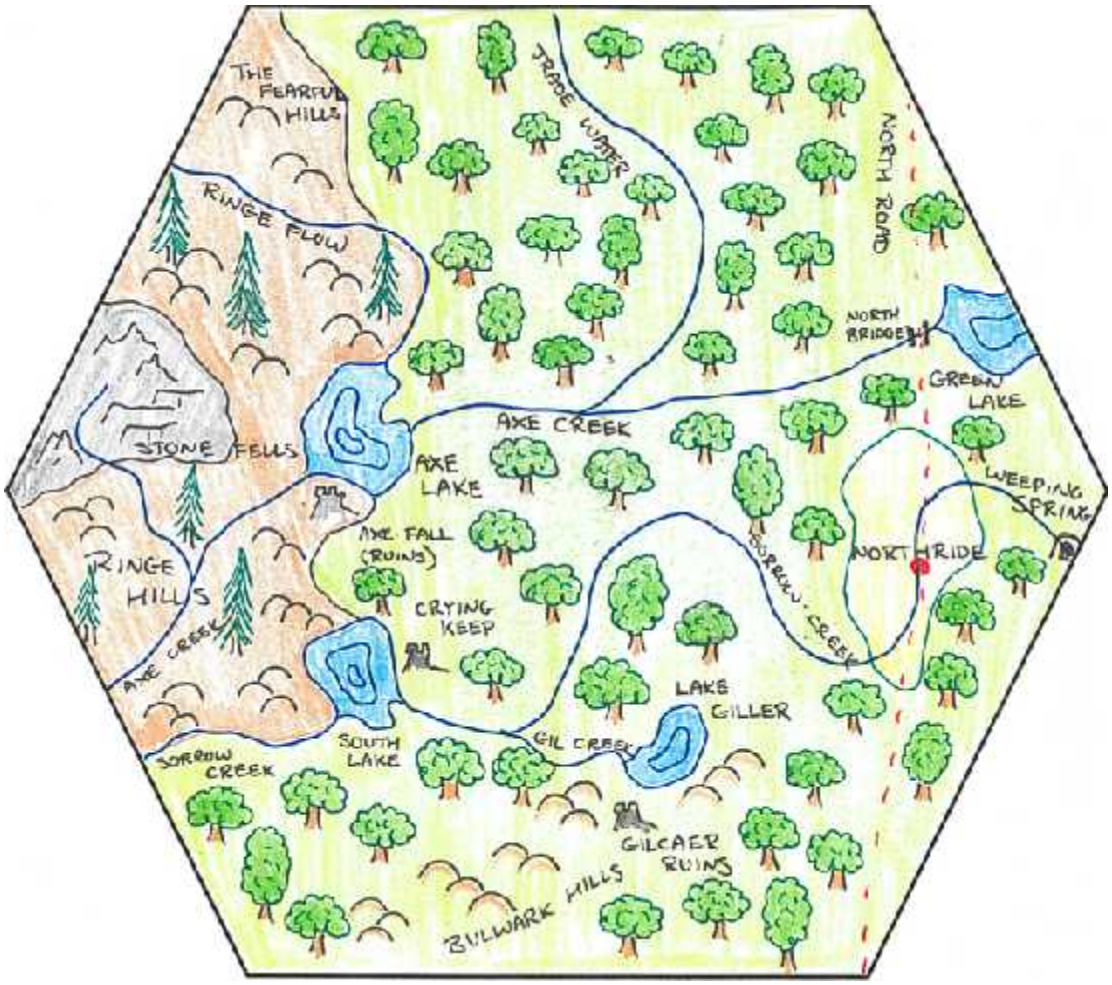
The North Ride region is characterized by low rolling hills the western third of the region, and a level, forested valley floor in the east. The region has many small streams, creeks and ponds scattered about it; in addition to four large lakes.

The Ringe Hills are low, rolling hills, fairly well covered with deciduous forest. The Ringe Hills are poorly drained, and most of

The depressions are marshy or swampy; indeed there are several swamps that cover a several square miles with a few scattered hills rising up out of the muck. The Ringe

Flow is a meandering river that is accepted as being the northern border of the Ringe Hills. The Ringe Flow is 20 to 30' wide, and about 10' deep at the deepest, although it averages 5 to 6' in most locations. It is a sluggish, muddy river.

The Stone Fells are rocky bad-lands. The little soil that has not been eroded away by rain and wind is shallow and infertile. The entire area has been denuded, and only patches of tough grass and thorny shrubs remain.



The Bulwark Hills represented a natural fortification; many times during the history of the Three Kingdoms human and dwarf armies made a stand here to prevent humanoid hordes from moving south into the Three Kingdoms. As a geographical high point, the Bulwark Hills also represent a divide between two watersheds.

Green Lake is a large, deep lake on the eastern edge of the region. Well over 100' deep and the largest lake in the region, Green Lake is known as a productive fishery, full of trout and whitefish. The lake is a popular hunting and camping destination for travelers and residents of Northride.

Axe Lake is a muddy, shallow lake (no more than 35' deep at the deepest, but usually less than 20' deep). Axe Lake is fed by Axe Creek, which drains Green Lake. Axe Creek is slow flowing, but wide (30', even 40' in spots) and deep (12 to 15'). The Trade Water is a wide (20' to 30') but shallow (5 to 8' depth) river that flows south from the divide in Three Crown Pass. In times past, travelers would load canoes into the Trade Water at Three Crowns Tower (now ruins) and float goods downstream. This route is no longer used, but there are abandoned portages and camp sites along the river.

Lake Giller is fed by springs that rise up from beneath the Bulwark Hills. Gil Creek (a small creek, only 10' wide in most spots and a few feet deep, freezing solid during the winters) drains Lake Giller into South Lake via Sorrow Creek.

The Weeping Springs (a massive exposed rock face that has rivulets of water "weep" out of fractures, trickling down the rock face to pool in the "Pool of Tears" a small pond) is the headwaters of Sorrow Creek. Sorrow Creek (a small creek 10 to 15' wide and 3' deep) flows to and through South Lake. Downstream of Gil Creek, Sorrow Creek is larger and deeper (15' wide and 5' deep).

Flora

The Northride region is forested, although the valley forests are much different than the hill forests. The valley is primarily open, park-like hardwood forests (oak, maple, aspen, with birch, willows and alder along the watercourses). There is little underbrush, making it easy to move through these forests on horseback. The forests in the Ringe and Fearful are denser, stunted and tangled mixed coniferous and deciduous forests (mostly gnarly

pine, stunted spruce and aspen trees) In the low swampy areas of the Ringe Hills the forests are stunted black spruce, swamp larch, bog birch and willow. Moving through these forests on foot is exhausting, and impossible on horseback.

The Stone Fells are desolate, with only sparse pockets of tough grasses and thorny shrubs growing in the cracks and nooks between exposed rock and stone.

Fauna

Deer are the most common large fauna in the region, although elk are found in the hills, moose follow the creeks, and forage in ponds. Bears are common (primarily little black bears in the valley forests, and some grizzlies in the mountains). The primary predators are wolf packs, although mountain lions, cave lions, and cave bears are not uncommon. Surprisingly, giant porcupines and giant skunks are both encountered with alarming frequency. There are also rumors of giant frogs, turtles and fish living in Green Lake; and sometimes making their way to Axe Lake via Axe Creek.

Land Use

With the exception of agriculture in the immediate vicinity of Northride, this region is wilderness.

Inhabitants

There are two groups of permanent habitants in Northride region; the human inhabitants of Northride, and the humanoid tribes that have strongholds in the Stone Fells. Dwarf traders and prospectors travel through the area (often traveling north to trade with Old Kingdoms, Northern Baronies and other communities and ports of the Great Bay). Occasionally, human or humanoid raiders (including ogres) will establish temporary camps or strongholds and harass the locals (until being driven out by adventurers, military forces from Northride, or rival humanoids from the Stone Fells).

Communities and Economy

The village of Northride (population of 400) is the only human or demi-human community in the region. Northride's economy is based on trade, although some agricultural activity takes place close to the village. The agricultural activity is primarily grain, carrot, turnip and potato farming, although a few farmers also have small flocks of sheep and goats. A lot of the residents also supplement their incomes by hunting (rabbits and game birds), although a few braver individuals range farther afield and hunt deer, elk or moose.

Features of Note

The Fearful Hills – these hills are avoided by human and humanoid alike as common consensus has it that these hills are haunted by the restless spirits of the dead that were interred here long ago. While common folk avoid the area, it is popular with tomb robbers and adventurers as a few of the tombs that have been found and explored have yielded treasures of silver, gold and other strange metals. The place is not without its dangerous however, and more adventurers fail to return than return rich.

The Stone Fells – these badlands are home to goblins, hobgoblins and gnolls (and presumably worse monsters as well). The humanoid clans are constantly skirmishing with each other, or raiding human mercantile traffic on the North Road. The humanoids tend to live in caves, very crude surface fortifications, or a combined surface fortification and cave complex.

Ruins of Axe Fall – a fortress built to contain the humanoid hordes of the Stone Fells, Axe Fall was fought over for centuries, constantly changing hands. Ultimately it was over-run, sacked and razed during the Shattering. The surface ruins are now used by humanoid raiders as a camp and base of operations. The entrances to the cellars and dungeons have been bricked over by the humanoids, as something lives down there that has made a meal out many a gnoll or goblin.

The Crying Keep – on the shores of South Lake, overlooking the inflowing Sorrow Creek, the Crying Keep was home to a Queen or Princess of the Rellivin Kingdom (one of the Three Kingdoms) that saw her husband and children all die in battle. Overcome with emotion, legend has it that she took her own life, and her ghost now haunts the ruins; her weeping can be heard on moonless nights. Of course, other legends claim that she died at the hands of the invaders, and her restless spirit now seeks to exact bloody vengeance on any who trespass in her home.

Gilcaer Ruins – these moss covered ruins were old and abandoned even before the Shattering, although human armies used them as a camp when defending the Bulwark Hills. The surface ruins are typically empty (although adventurers are warned that stirges, spiders and other vermin occasionally nest here and prey upon the unwary), and the tunnels beneath the ruins are also

empty, echoing corridors. Corridors that end in magically sealed portals that no one has ever succeeded in opening.

North Bridge – this wide bridge, enough for 2 wagons to pass in opposite directions, has been repaired many times; so often in fact that it is questionable as to whether any original structure remains. This represents the northern-most point of the patrols from Northpoint.

Ring of Lycanthropy

These platinum rings feature an engraving of a were creature. When a command word is spoken the wearer transforms into the type of were creature displayed on the ring. Note that possessions are not transformed, so there may be side effects when transforming, especially if armor is worn. Roll hp for the were-form; the character will have the greater of that value or their normal hp. All other abilities, e.g., attacks, armor class, special abilities, etc., are that of the were-form Transformation may be made once per day and lasts up to 6 turns. When transforming back, up to 10% of any lost hp may be healed.

Note that there is a 1% cumulative chance per usage that the character will be afflicted with the form of lycanthropy matching the engraving on the ring.

GP value 6,000; XP value 800

Ring of Magic Resistance

When one of these rings is worn the wearer gains the benefit of magic resistance. If the wearer already has magic resistance the resistances are not cumulative, but the higher resistance will be granted. The resistance granted by a ring is rolled as follows:

d100	Resistance
01-20	5%
21-40	10%
41-60	15%
61-80	20%
81-85	25%
86-90	30%
91-94	35%
95-97	40%
98-99	45%
00	50%

GP value 5,000 per 5%; XP value 500 per 5%

Ring of Spell Suppression

When worn this ring prevents the wearer from successfully casting spells or invoking innate magical abilities. Spells may be cast and innate abilities attempted, but the results are negated. This causes the spell to be lost from memory, spell components to be expended, etc. However, the wearer may have spells cast upon them by another, so clerical *Cure Light Wounds* functions on the wearer, as does *Fireball*.

Once worn, this ring may not be removed unless the wearer is dead, or if *Remove Curse*, treated as *Dispel Magic* against 9th level magic, is successfully cast. This allows removal of the ring, but does not damage it.

This ring is somewhat common, and is used to help imprison spell casters and creatures with innate spell ability. It is rumored that a version exists which uses a command word to enable removal of the ring.

GP value 11,000; XP value nil

Ring of Flying

This ring empowers the wearer to fly as per the Fly spell. Airspeed is 12" (MC:C), the wearer may carry up to 300 lbs (including himself), and the ring will function for 2d6+6 turns per day. When the effect is ending, the ring will pulse for 1 segment at the beginning of each round for 3 rounds, then the magic will end. The magic may be used in 1-turn increments, divided up as the wearer desires. The DM should roll the number of turns of usage for that day and keep track -- the character will not know how much time they have, not until the ring warns that the magic is ending.

GP value 7,500; XP value 1,500

by Bryan Fazekas

The Gaming Gourmet: Leftover Brunswick Stew

by Doug Rector

Though I am a born NY Yankee, I seem to keep moving away and coming back. The longest I was ever gone was when I moved to Georgia for 16 years. While I can live without the southern habit of deep frying everything, I did fall in love with a lot of the southern specialties. Baking powder biscuits with sausage gravy have added a goodly number of inches to my waistline over the years, and pulled pork Carolina style is a gift from the gods.

But above it all was Brunswick Stew. The origins of Brunswick Stew are somewhat cloudy. Several places are named Brunswick, and a few that aren't claim it originated with them and that the rest of the claimants are deluded or downright liars. The only thing that is generally agreed on is that it was a stew originally made with wild game, squirrel, venison, wild turkey, wild boar, and perhaps some less palatable sounding animals. It was a strong flavored tomato based stew to mask the gamey flavor of the meat in it. It was slow cooked to tenderize the often tough and stringy ingredients. It is something that our D&D party might eat on the trail if they had a camp and a decent cook.

My version ought to be called leftover stew because I will save up the leftovers from several meals in the freezer with just the intention of making this stew. It never really comes out the same twice in a row, but that's fine. Its Brunswick Stew. It's not supposed to.

Leftover Brunswick Stew

2 medium or 1 large onion, coarse chopped

1x 15oz bottle BBQ sauce (hickory flavor)

1 cup ketchup

1x 10 oz bottle steak sauce

1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce

1x 28 oz can diced tomatoes

2x 15oz cans tomatoes with green chilies

Several generous squirts Louisiana Hot Sauce

Leftover chicken, turkey, roast pork, roast beef, pulled pork, venison, sausage, or whatever (ham not recommended) If there is not enough leftover meat add COOKED ground beef, turkey and/or pork to your taste. The more the merrier I say. Chop the meat into large bite sized pieces - it will break down more in the cooking.

1 lb frozen sliced okra

1 lb frozen corn

1 lb frozen lima beans

2 lbs fresh potatoes cubed

Throw the first 8 ingredients in the crock pot and cook on high until the onion and tomatoes soften - about 2 hours or so. Then add the meat and vegetables, reduce to low and simmer until the potatoes are cooked through. Serve with bread and butter. And large spoons.

Featured Fiction: Amalric's Shrine

by Dan Rasaiah

This issue's featured fiction gives us a unique take on the lonely tavern

The inn was a squat two story stone structure set atop a small hill. The forest had been cleared for a hundred yards around, and the black wood stumps protruded from the ground like stubble on some verdant giant.

The inn lacked a conventional fence, though a hunched man with a large hessian sack was pouring a thin ring of salt, which surrounded the building at a distance of fifty paces.

"That's the last of it," declared the hunched figure, shaking the white crystals onto the frost hardened ground. "Anything else before I head inside sir?"

"That'll be all, thank you Corben," replied a tall man pressing a wafer into the salt. "Prepare some tea and I'll finish up here. Oh, and tell Cedric to bring another barrel in from the larder." The tall figure was dressed in simple robes which did little to disguise his imposing frame, and muttered prayers to Amalric as he administered the wafers equidistant around the salt ring. His face was creased with age and frost crystals glittered in his long white hair and full beard. He ended his circular sacrament at the rickety wooden gate, and regarded the forest, some several hundred yards distant, with hardened grey eyes.

"Not tonight do you trespass these hallowed halls," uttered Aron, invoking the ancient creed of the Knights of the Grave, as he kissed the shining gold plaque tacked to the wooden arch before returning to the warmth of the Inn.

* * *

The riders breached the edge of Daarken Wood and brought their steeds to a halt. The wan setting sun afforded little warmth, but the armoured group soaked in the ruddy glow, for it had been a cold and desolate journey, and their destination was a foreboding one.

"Unfurl the banner," commanded the lead rider, "Amalric's shrine lays ahead."

With a nod of assent, the bearer unrolled and hoisted aloft the sacred standard. A faint glow spread out from the ancient fabric and the sight of the mighty lion with the sun betwixt its teeth filled the riders with renewed vigour. The banner fluttered gently in the breeze and the darkening rays tinted the lion in gory red, like a warrior bathed in the libation of a battle fought since the dawn of time.

"Formation!" ordered Elyan, and the riders manoeuvred their steeds into a tight twin file.

Known as the 'Golden Star', Elyan had led many of the veteran crusaders on past campaigns, and he was revered as both a warrior and commander. To the unblooded younger knights, he was someone heard of but never seen, a legend, yet here he was in flesh and blood encased in mighty steel, Amalric's hand on mortal soil. Like they had done for many weeks past, the crusaders dutifully followed their leader as he guided his destrier toward the inn on the hill.

* * *

Aron warmed his frigid hands in front of the crackling hearth. With every passing year the cold seemed to seep deeper into his bones, and he briefly wondered how much longer he could stand the post. The enemy grew strong and bold, and the inn on the hill was the last bastion of resistance in the outer wastes that were Daarken Wood. He was bound by sacred oath to be custodian of the inn, but in the dark recesses of the night when the beasts howled for his mortal soul, he wondered whether his nerve could hold till a replacement arrived.

A comforting earthy aroma interrupted his melancholy.

"Sir, your soup is ready."

"Thank you Corben," replied Aron with a warm smile. The sight of his devoted squire dispelled all thoughts of doubt from Aron's mind. Corben had been his father's squire when Aron was just a boy, and when Sir Uriel Agravain fell during the Battle of Brennor's Pass, Corben had passed to the younger Agravain as duty dictated.

"It's turnips again I'm afraid, as the frost has killed the crops and we're on rations till the thaw."

"That's fine old friend. Ladle yourself a bowl and join me please, it's been too long since we dined together."

"As you wish, Sir."

* * *

"... that he was Sir, a fine warrior. To your father!"

The two old men raised their pitchers in salute when the peal of trumpets echoed throughout the evening air.

Aron reached instinctively for a sword that wasn't there, and Corben hopped to his feet and bounded to the window with an agility that belied his age and hunched stature.

"Riders Sir! They bear Amalric's standard! A large group, there must be a hundred or more!"

"Even at this late hour your eyesight is remarkable old friend; a gift from the Lightbringer no doubt," remarked Aron, joining Corben at the window. He regarded the long line of armoured riders streaming out of Daarken wood, a mighty group indeed! It had been many years since such a band had passed through his door. "Prepare ale and fare best you can old friend, and send Cedric out to tend the horses, our comrades will be tired after their journey."

* * *

The riders crested the hill and reached the gate of the Inn. A rotund man with powerful shoulders wearing a simple brown smock barred the gateway. The man had a thick dark beard, the arms of a blacksmith, and his eyes drooped like he was battling the onset of sleep.

"Greetings friend," said Elyan, "we are crusaders riding under Amalric's own standard, seeking solace at the shrine. I am Elyan Golden Star and I vouch for these men."

The bearded gatekeeper let out a loud belch, and the waft of stale ale reached Elyan's nostrils.

"Welcome to the dead landss," slurred the man and beckoned the riders to enter. "Make sssure all the horshes are inshide the ssalt ... they'll have to sshtay here, we've not the room in the sshtables."

"Surely Master gatekeeper the steeds can graze the hill here? Abundant space and the grass is ..."

"Inshide I sshaid!" barked the gatekeeper, tottering on inebriated legs "I'll need to tether them ... the gravecrawlersssh like their meat. Horsh, man ... child; itsh all the sshame to them."

* * *

The smell of wood-smoke, soup, sweat and ale mingled throughout the inn. It had been decades since its walls had housed half this many, and Aron hadn't glimpsed this much steel since his days in the King's own. Whilst they had neither the food nor the floor-space to cater to such a band, he admitted that the sight of so many of Amalric's foot soldiers gave him a sense of confidence.

"So tell me of your journey Sir Elyan, did you fall awry of trouble during the long road through the wood?"

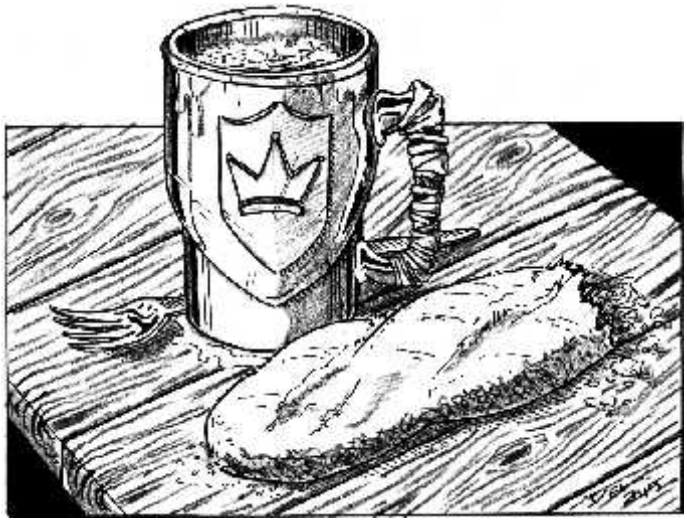
"Aye Master Aron, that we did. Farmers and villagers recently fallen afoul of the plague, with the scent of cloying earth and the freshly dug grave on their fingertips. Mindless beasts, and no real danger to men such as we, but disconcerting to say the least. Poor souls, may they find peace."

Aron regarded the man they called 'Golden Star'. Tall and powerfully built, with long blonde curls falling over his shoulders like a mane of their very master. His tawny beard was streaked with mud and dirt, and his armour, resplendent despite the muck of the road, bore the dents and nicks of a hundred campaigns. He had the air of one of Amalric's chosen but his voice was soft and there was humility in his mannerisms. Yes, this was a great man that sat before him.

"I'm afraid the enemy has pushed deep, and we are now most certainly behind his line," replied Aron. "This inn is now an island, an oasis amongst death and corruption,

and I, like some caretaker who feeds and replenishes the sailors brave enough to skirt its dreaded seas."

Elyan smiled at the old man. His baritone voice and hard eyes carried a sense of command, and his large frame and many scars told a warrior's tale. He was past his best years to be sure but the Golden Star had no doubt that Sir Aron, custodian of the inn on the hill, was once a formidable warrior.



"And of the Vulghyr, those winged beasts, was there any sign of them to the West?"

Elyan shook his head "I'm afraid that is an evil of which I am ignorant. What are these winged creatures you speak of?"

Aron took a long drought from his mug, "the Vulghyr ... a scourge of the Arch-lich's making. They are similar to ghouls in countenance, but larger and winged like a great bat. They are ravenous creatures, I have seen a pair of the beasts carry aloft a full grown bull before ripping it apart and devouring it wholesale."

"And what of that venom-like paralysis that ghouls transmit? Do these Vulghyr share that same dark power?"

"That Sir Elyan I cannot say, as I have merely observed the beasts from afar and heard secondhand tales of their plunder. I have witnessed something though which matches stories told by the villagers. It seems the fiends can vomit forth some sort of contagion: a dark shower of their own blood which infects and kills the living. I cannot vouch for the complete veracity of this claim, but the speed with which Letalis has overrun these once stalwart lands makes me amenable to the tale. The Arch-lich is a devious and formidable adversary ... he ever looks for chinks in our armour."

"Forgive me for intruding Master Aron," interrupted one of the knights, "but how have you defended the inn against such an enemy? It doesn't look like this place is very well protected, with only two old men, pardon me; two men, and a drunk defending it? And not even a wall to assist your plight?"

Aron regarded the man. He was younger than Elyan, but had hard eyes and the bearing of a man long inured to violence. His hair was brush fire red, and his beard befitted one of such a mighty frame, for the man was a veritable giant, and the only man in the inn who towered over Aron and Elyan.

"Master Aron, forgive my man here," said the Golden Star, "he has been long on the road and has forgotten his manners. May I introduce Sir Gareth deGrey. A fine warrior and the bravest knight I have ever fought alongside."

Aron nodded in greeting. "A fine question Sir Gareth. No doubt you have heard the history of this place, but allow me to embellish nonetheless, we get so few crusaders passing through these days and the story is pertinent to your query. As you are probably aware, the inn was once the site of a chapel dedicated to our Lord, and these here are consecrated grounds. In fact these very walls are built on the husk of that former building, hence the name, Amalric's Shrine, as it is known to some. After the rise of Letalis, the people fled these lands, abandoning the chapel and priests to their own fate. The area became the front line of the war, and the chapel transformed into a way-station and resupply point for the passing soldiers. When the enemy gained the upper hand and the front was shifted to the South, the chapel became a stopping point for crusaders such as yourselves, willing to risk their lives and take the battle straight to the heart of the enemy. The church hierarchy realised the strategic importance of the inn and entrusted its care to my order, the Knights of the Hallowed Grave."

At this disclosure a noticeable silence descended, as several of the surrounding men formerly engaged in their own conversations hushed and reappraised the old man. The Knights of the Hallowed Grave were an ancient and all but forgotten order of Amalric. Known as 'Grave Knights' to the bards and common man, they were a legendary order, taking as their members only the most capable and dedicated warriors held in the highest favour of the Lightbringer. To the men present, they were a thing of the past, an ideal of a standard aspired to but long forgotten. The declaration signaled this old man was clearly more than he appeared.

Aron, oblivious or uncaring of the reverent stares, took a deep swill from his mug and continued the tale:

"Once we took custody of the Inn we became aware of a benevolence surrounding the place, a divine force which seemed to hold the enemy at bay. It was subsequently revealed to us that the priests of the chapel were protecting a tomb, the final resting place of a holy warrior, buried deep within the catacombs. One of my forebears uncovered this tomb, whose emanations make this place impregnable to the soulless. A plaque on the tomb instructs that provided there is one of unshakeable faith guarding the premises, Amalric's Shrine shall never fall. Thus generation after generation, one of my order has taken the sacred oath of custodianship of the inn, and protected those that would battle darkness in its very yard."

"And what of the salt ring outside?" queried Elyan.

"Ah yes, the salt. We discovered over the years that the enemy couldn't breach the threshold of the inn proper which was protection enough in days past when we held these lands for miles around. However when we were driven back, and the land fell into the hands of Letalis, the enemy surrounded us. Slavering ghouls and worse wailed on the walls and door every night. Our crops were destroyed and livestock butchered. We were under siege, and recognised that we would need to extend the protective barrier to survive. Through bitter trial and error we discovered that Letalis' minions despise salt, and when blessed with Amalric's favour ..."

"The wafers," remarked Elyan.

"Exactly," continued Aron, "when the salt is blessed, it becomes an impenetrable barrier."

"And what of these 'Vulghyr'? Can they not gain entry via the skies?" asked Gareth.

"No they cannot," replied Aron. "The salt ring seems to contain the tomb's protective force in a sphere which protects the air as well as the ground. I used to hear the blasted creatures screeching and wailing high above in the dark of night. Though they despair, they never quit attempting entry into this place. Like black rain on a roof do the talons and teeth of the cursed batter on this barrier we have erected."

"Will they come tonight?" asked Elyan, his hand resting on the pommel of his sword.

"They come every night," replied Aron finishing his mug.

* * *

The men lay strewn across the floor like a metallic carpet, for Elyan forbade them the removal of their armor despite Aron's assurances of safety. Prior to extinguishing the lanterns, Aron had made each man swear an oath to remain within the inn, no matter what creature of the pit beckoned him from the salt perimeter. Such precautions would seem absurd to most, but these were Crusaders, and Aron had been forced to restrain more than one over-eager zealot in the past. The integrity of the salt perimeter was sacrosanct, and like a bubble being pricked, its transgression could spell disaster.

"And what of him?" questioned Elyan, gesturing to the drunken figure passed out in the corner. A long line of drool depended from the edge of the gatekeeper's mouth, and the front of his brown smock was stained with beer. Every once in a while, between thunderous snores, he would mutter incoherently, and his arms occasionally waved back and forth like he was wielding a weapon.

"Cedric? He helps out around the inn. Brews the beer that we're all drinking, and he has a talent for growing turnips. Doesn't talk much ... from what little he's said I've gathered that he was once a fighting man, met a girl and settled down on a farm. He was abroad selling his produce when Letalis' minions struck in the night. Back in those days people thought they were safe in these parts ... for the Lich to strike so far to the West was unthinkable. Cedric lost his whole family and turned to drink, as people often do. I awoke one day to find him asleep on our door step; I think he had nowhere else to go."

"And you continue abetting his habit? Pardon me for saying it Master Aron but I would think it prudent to cut the man off?"

"Perhaps," replied Aron, "but I think Cedric has to stare into the dark and want to bring himself out. He's suffering now, but I don't think he's yet reached the bottom of that abyss. I've always said, you can't save a man that doesn't want to be saved."

Elyan pondered Aron's words, the glow of the hearth rendering him in gold like a knightly statue of ages past. "Wise words indeed Master Aron. But I digress; as we discussed earlier, I'd be most grateful if you could debrief the men on the morrow. We're strangers in these parts, and could use all the intelligence we can garner. Right now however, sleep is the only thing on my mind."

"Of course Sir Elyan," replied Aron, "I will tell you all I know. But as far as sleep is concerned, I fear it will elude you this night."

* * *

It began when the moon was at its zenith. A keening wail that surrounded the inn and grew in volume like a swelling wave. What few men were sleeping woke with a start, and all lunged for sword or mace or axe. The men crowded the windows and peered out at the swarm loping up the hill. The grey silhouettes shone brightly in the moonlight, and their capering gait seemed dreamy and unnatural. These were not the mindless automatons they had encountered previously on the trail; these were animated, slavering things of darkness, bent on the flesh and warmth of human prey. The wave surged at the inn, the whites of the creatures' eyes clearly visible, as were their sharp talons and fanged maws; however like a wave breaking on rock, the creatures' rabid charge was halted by the salt line. Shrieking as if they had run into searing flame, the horde retreated from the perimeter, mouthing obscenities at the blockade.

"Hold men!" ordered Aron, his baritone echoing as he quickly descended the stairwell carrying a hooded lantern and bearing the holy symbol of Amalric.

Outside, large shadows could be seen streaking over the ghoulish horde, and glints of moonlight hinted at giant winged abominations, who dragged their claws against the invisible barrier and spat globules of deadly corruption, which flashed and vaporized like water tossed into a conflagration upon hitting the holy sphere.

"Vulghyr" intoned Elyan, regarding this new threat with defiance in eyes.

And so the crusaders spent their first night at the inn on the hill, clutching weapons and holy symbols, joined in prayer and communion as their enemy thrashed against the barrier, seeking a weakness that would allow them to feast on mortal flesh. It wasn't until the soft light of dawn began tinting the landscape pale magenta, that the fiends retreated into the sanctuary of the forest, seeking dark places where the god of light couldn't reach.

* * *

"We could have had them!" roared Gareth over a breakfast of steaming turnip soup and mouldy bread. "The foot soldiers of devildom at our very door and we cower inside like meek women! An outrage!"

"That's enough Gareth," commanded Elyan in a quiet but forceful tone. "We are guests in this house, and our host forbade us violence. I feel your anguish ... to have journeyed so far on such a worthy quest, and to have the enemy within our grasp ... bitter it is. It is small comfort my large friend, but we must believe that there is a greater path we must tread which warrants such prudence."

"Aye Sir Elyan, there is a greater path," said Aron seated at the head of the table and toying with a chunk of turnip with his spoon.

"Sir Gareth was right," remarked the old knight, "these were indeed the foot soldiers of devildom. Foot soldiers. Easily replaceable and irrelevant to the greater struggle at hand. To kill the snake you must sever its head not dance with its tail."

"And where may we find this head," barked Gareth, his anger-reddened skin almost matching his hair.

"The Arch-Lich is an ambitious foe. He has vassals serving him who are an extension of his power; it is an empire he is creating; an empire of the dead. It is the reason he has been able to wage war on such a wide front, and retain control over his spoils. We never imagined such a dread beast of the pit could be so calculating, and in our underestimation, we find ourselves with much ground to regain. So, we come to the matter at hand: the vassal who controls these lands ... a despot known as Duke Korga."

"Korga? I know that name." said Elyan.

"Yes Sir Elyan, House Korga is a lineage that runs back centuries in these parts, and the Duke's father Anton once ruled these lands with a firm but fair hand. His son, I'm afraid, is something altogether different. Always of foul mien, Duke Korga has become something more sinister. The fool fell under the Arch-Lich's sway, his promises of power were too much to resist, and now the vampyr, Korga, feasts on the very people his family once swore to protect."

"Sacrilege," whispered Sir Elyan aghast.

"Yes Sir Elyan, it is. It is this particular snake which we must behead. To have any hope of reclaiming these lands and complete a counter-offensive against Letalis, the vampyr Korga must fall."

"Where can we find this Korga?" questioned Gareth, his face as hard and cold as the flagstones underfoot.

"Korga's castle lays a week's ride from the inn. I can give you a map, and as much detail as this old memory can recall. The journey is a dangerous one ... there are many

creatures of corruption along the road, and the beast at the end ... well, it will take all your courage and strength to unseat him from his demesne."

* * *

The weeks passed slowly, and winter's talons began clawing at the inn on the Hill. A noticeable change had overcome Cedric, who took to the shoveling of snow and chopping of wood with gusto, and now only succumbed to drink during the cold bitter nights. It seemed that the pious crusaders and their unwavering resolve had awoken something deep within him, the warrior spirit perhaps that sleeps but is never truly quashed. During the early dawn he kept vigil in the taproom, and Aron could hear the scrapes of the whetstone, as Cedric honed his old weapon and slurred warrior's chants in a tongue long forgotten.

Of Elyan and his crusaders there was no sign or word, and Aron feared that they had been erased from the ledger of life like so many that had come before them and taken refuge at Amalric's Shrine. Though they had stayed mere days, Aron had grown fond of the knight they called the 'Golden Star', and even the tempestuous giant Gareth, with his russet locks and mighty beard, had bent a knee and listened avidly as the Grave Knight regaled them with tales of battles fought and wars of ancient time. They shared the bond of warriors, and the greater bond of men who bled fighting under the standard that declared no quarter against darkness.

Aron prayed for those valiant men each night, and though in his heart feared they were lost, had faith that they now stood at Amalric's right hand, reunited with lost comrades and basking in the Lightbringer's glow.

* * *

Trumpets in the dark. *Aron sat astride his destrier, and waved to the stands. The crowd cheered and hollered in response, for the youthful knight Sir Aron Agravain had unseated six other horsemen, and now one last knight stood between himself and glory. He raised his visor and addressed his opponent.* Trumpets in the dark. *The sun was bright yet Aron felt strangely cold. His opponent raised his visor, and even at this distance Aron could make out the stark white of bleached bone, and the pin points of flickering red fire in the empty eye sockets. The rictus grin of the skeletal head laughed a high-pitched mocking laugh, which was joined by the multitude who began shambling toward the lists as flesh and skin sloughed off their bones, and the worms of the grave began spewing out of riven holes and gaps where none should be.* Trumpets in the dark ... a familiar voice ... *Aron's destrier began whinnying and spinning in tight circles as he fought to control the terrified beast. The shambling mass were almost upon him; he dropped his lance and drew his sword.*

"Fool. You cannot resist us," mocked the skeletal rider who had drawn his own sword, a night black blade that seemed to suck in the very fabric of reality around it.

"We are legion."

Aron spurred his horse into a charge and bore down on the skeletal rider roaring the battle cry of his forefathers. The dead rider also charged, his purple cloak billowing out behind him like infernal wings, and his steed shedding ash fire, and leaving smouldering blots of burnt grass where its flaming hooves struck the earth in showers of sparks. The two met in the center of the lists, blade crashing upon blade as the ... peal of trumpets rippled through the early dawn and Corben was shouting from the taproom.

"Sir! Come quickly! Torches! Battle in the forest!"

Aron groggily rolled out of bed and staggered down to the taproom below. The curtain of night was lifting and the surrounding land was tinted blue black and cold. Flickering torches could be seen breaching the forest edge, and the faint murmur of battle bubbled from the dense foliage.

Around the inn, the night was silent and empty.

"The fiends have left their post Corben. Something strange is afoot" whispered Aron.

A faint white glow seeped out of the forest edge and blended with the red torchlight, casting giant shadows on the forest canopy of swinging swords and gnashing talons, like a very pantomime of Hell as the battle spilled from the forest.

A dozen armoured knights clustered around a glowing white standard, whilst fiends, flying and afoot, snapped and lashed at them with wicked claw and tooth. The knights were bloody and tattered, their once gleaming armour now stained dark brown and red, and their swords dripped black ichor as if the warriors themselves had been dragged from the stygian depths of Lethe and dropped soiled and battered upon its lonely shore.

"The Lion Sir! Amalric's standard!" exclaimed Corben.

"It cannot be!" muttered Aron.

The beleaguered knights were slowly retreating up the slope toward the inn, but loping black shapes could be seen streaming toward them from all directions, and already they were hopelessly outnumbered. At the rear of the group a huge plated figure hewed his mighty greatsword in gleaming arcs, cutting down ghoulish foes and sending their cold grey limbs spiraling like unholy

chaff. Like his comrades, the giant was covered in blood, and his red hair, now stained dark, rippled in the torchlight like living flame.

"Sir Gareth!" gasped Aron, his own eyes now confirming what his heart wished but reason denied.

A blast of light streaked from the group of knights, immolating a dozen denizens of the pit in holy white fire, their wicked shrieks ricocheting up the hillside. The source of the blast was a tall knight, Amalric's symbol outstretched in his right hand whilst his left arm was clutched tightly to his chest, dark rivulets pumping from the elbow joint and running down his breastplate. His helmet had been struck clear, and a savage gash ran from the center of his forehead to behind his ear where a swooping Vulghyr had struck. His blue eyes blazed from behind the mask of blood and he roared an oath to his god, acknowledged by a corona of amber light which bathed the knight's body and peaked in four diffuse arms like a pulsing star in a clear night sky.

"Elyan ..." murmured Aron, "to arms Corben! The Golden Star is besieged!"

"But Sir, the oath! You cannot leave the inn else we are all lost!"

"Those men will fall without help and I'll not let Amalric's chosen die on my doorstep! Time is of the essence old friend, find Cedric, we need all hands!"

The warrior's fire was now flowing through the Grave Knight as he made for the chest where his sword and shield lay.

It was all happening too fast for the old squire, "But ... what of your armour Sir?!"

"No time Corben! Amalric will have to be my armour this day!"

* * *

The ghoul's head exploded in a fount of necrotic gore as Elyan smote it between the eyes with his holy symbol. In Daarken Wood he had lost his sword in the cleaved skull of a giant made of bone, and now fought with the very emblem he had dedicated his life to. For every fiend he destroyed though, two seemed to take its place, and he was steadily weakening from blood loss. The sword stroke from the skeletal knight had cut deep, rendering his left arm useless, and though the fiend had paid for the wound with its head, his sword was now gone and his powers of healing long depleted, for they had been hounded through the wood for days without respite, and their horses had long since fallen to the undead horde.

"Vulghyr!" roared Gareth as a huge dark shape plunged from the sky and spewed a torrent of foul corruption on the young knight Terrowin, before grabbing another in its black wiry arms. The knight was borne aloft, the fiend's long teeth sinking deep into the join where shoulder meets neck before Gareth's greatsword ran four feet of steel through the Vulghyr's side. An older veteran, Tarquin of Lleylander went to the knight's aid, who was still wrestling with the dying winged abomination like some steel-clad babe held in an unhallowed embrace. With one clean stroke Tarquin's blade separated the Vulghyr's head from its shoulders while in the background, Terrowin retched syrupy black gore and gurgled his last breath, falling victim to the fiend's foul baptism.

"Fall back men!" bellowed Elyan, "we are almost there, the inn is within sight!" Even as he screamed the words, the Golden Star knew they were cut off. They were tantalisingly close, but the enemy seemed endless, and his men were exhausted and badly wounded. All around him steel flashed, and ghouls and worse dropped under the crusaders' deathly strokes, but it seemed their cause would be lost on the very cusp of solace.

"Horses, I hear horses!" yelled a young raven-haired knight as he dropped to a knee and disemboweled a lunging grave crawler.

The sound of pounding hooves echoed down the hillside as Aron, roaring Amalric's battle cry, bore down on the fray. Despite his years, he felt light in the saddle, and the thrill of imminent battle coursing through him was like an old friend that he had deserted for too long.

"We are aided sir!" yelled Darcy Sangradden as he buried his sword to the hilt in a six-legged corpulent mass. "The Grave Knight is with us!"

Elyan dispatched a ghast with a backhand blow from his symbol that sent the creature spiraling in screaming,

smoking desolation, and looked up in time to see Sir Aron Agravain unleash the sword of his ancestors on their mutual enemy.

Aron had lost much of his strength over the years, but none of his skill, and with the force of the charging destrier behind him, his sword stroke swung clean through the torso of an ogrish zombie, and took the head off a ghoul in the follow through. His steed's metal-shod hooves took down another two grave crawlers, their skulls crushed, as Aron set to work left and right of the saddle with sweeping strokes that sent the dead reeling back to the ground from whence they came.

The grave knight's deadly charge had opened a path through the enemy, and for the first time in days, Elyan felt hopeful they may yet live.

"Press hard men! We are almost there!" roared Elyan before seeing Aron's horse fall beneath a swarm of taloned death, the grave knight leaping from the saddle. The old man's knee buckled on landing and he now fought wincing and hobbled, though with no less ferocity.

"Gareth! To me!" yelled Elyan, darting forward and smiting a grave crawler hanging from the back of the old knight. Aron spun and the two warriors fought shoulder to shoulder, sword and holy symbol whistling through the grey festering pack, dropping them like reeds. Those that would live would never forget the sight of the Grave Knight and the Golden Star bringing divine justice to the reprobates in an epiphany of righteous violence, nor the sight of Gareth, who plucked Elyan from the ground when he finally fell and slung him over his shoulder as you would a child, all the while weeping and delivering vicious deliverance with his sword.

They made slow bloody progress up the hill, when Tarquin Lleylander died. There was nothing particularly heroic about his death, except for the fact that he made it so far. He dispatched a grave crawler with a clean straight thrust, then feeling his heart give, sat down, and with the sight of an infinity of warm golden rays flooding his vision, toppled to the ground and lay unmoving.

They were a mere half dozen remaining with the gate in sight, when a Vulghyr dropped from the sky and vomited its contagion on Aron. The grave knight, seeing the incoming shadow in dawn's first light, had the foresight to raise his shield, which protected him from the beast's deadly spittle, and was now locked in vicious combat with the winged giant. He ran the beast through but still it came on, rending his chest, and leaving great pink gouges which wept blood down the old knight's shredded shirt. Two more deft thrusts slowed the beast, but it was joined by a second Vulghyr which sank its teeth into Aron's shield arm. The old knight tried to wrest his arm free when his knee buckled and he fell to the hard ground, ice crystals grating against his face, as the giant beast loomed leering above. He readied himself for the end when an axe struck clean through the creature's head, coming to a crunching halt in its breastbone. Cackling madly, Cedric tugged the axe free, and in a whistling arc swung its heavy end into the temple of the other Vulghyr, which joined its companion in a crumpled heap.

"Cedric!" gasped Aron in surprised relief.

"Get through the gate!" roared the gatekeeper. "I'll hold them here!"

The shattered remains of Elyan's band staggered and crawled toward the gate, while Cedric swung his axe with reckless abandon. The misery and rage that had accumulated in him came spilling out in cathartic destruction, as he returned to the grave its reluctant but rightful citizens.

"Hurry Sir Gareth! Master Aron must be within the perimeter to keep the fiends out!" yelled Corben from within the salt ring.

Cedric was holding back the horde, but already several fiends had slipped past his whirling barricade and the familiar shadows of Vulghyr were streaking ominously along the ground. Sensing the prize that had eluded them for so long was ripe for plunder, the Vulghyr bypassed the knights and dove straight for Corben and the inn proper.

"Master Aron! Quickly!" screamed Corben, but Aron's knee had completely given out and he was leaning on Gareth who was already encumbered by Elyan's limp body draped over his shoulder.

Overhead, the Vulghyr overtook the crippled knights and dove for the undefended old squire.

"No!" shrieked Corben raising his hands in feeble defiance, when the Vulghyr smashed headfirst into the invisible sphere, their bodies exploding into fine ash.

"The barrier!" gasped Gareth still a stride short of the gate, "it's holding!" The knight collapsed through the gateway, dropping Elyan and Aron, closely followed by Timor, Janos the standard bearer, and Darcy Sangradden.

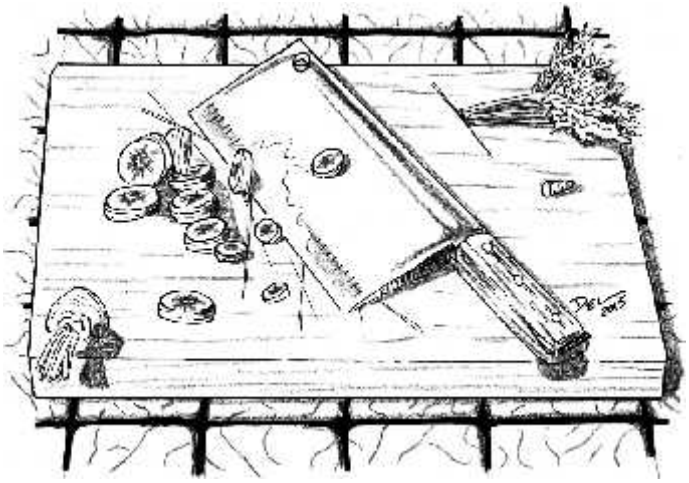
Behind them a mound of corpses lay before Cedric, who added yet more provender to his mortic harvest before a ghoul raked a talon across the side of his neck, spilling claret down his brown smock. Cedric whirled and

decapitated the monster, when the first tingles of paralysis began sweeping through his body and his arms and legs became as leaden weights.

"Ah, so it ends thus," whispered Cedric as his sank his axe into the head of a diving ghast, and welcomed its brothers in open arms before the gateway.

"No!" roared Gareth, lunging through the portal and grabbing Cedric under both arms. A dozen scrabbling fiends struck wildly at the red giant, but his armor held, and he was able to fall back through the gate, collapsing with Cedric in a heap.

The fiends howled and threw themselves at the barrier, but it held, and they were thrown back, wounds smoking for their trouble.



Gareth rolled to his side and checked Cedric, who despite bleeding profusely and thoroughly paralysed, was very much alive. His face was frozen in a manic grin, and a chunk of grey flesh hung limply from his mouth, the bounty from a mauled ghoul.

Elyan was a gory tattered mess, and his hair so drenched with blood that he and Gareth appeared as twins.

Aron held an ear to his chest.

"He lives," said the Grave Knight, "but his breathing is shallow."

The Golden star's eyes fluttered open, "... Korga ...", he gasped feebly pointing behind Aron.

The Grave Knight swung about as quickly as his wounded body would allow and raised his sword, preparing for a threat more dire than any they had yet faced when he noticed for the first time the bloody sack tied to the crosspiece of Jano's standard. The bulge was unmistakably head shaped, and the base of the sack was black with dried blood where the neck would be.

"Victory ..." whispered Elyan before succumbing to unconsciousness.

* * *

The period of convalescence following the mighty battle was an uneventful one. The crusaders were healed to the limit of the resources at Amalric's shrine, and were able to enjoy uninterrupted nights of restful sleep, for the undead scourge had apparently disbanded, and no longer thronged the salt ring. They had lost none of the men who had made it back, and even Elyan, who was the most severely wounded, was now able to walk, albeit gingerly, for the first time since the battle.

On the third night when the crusaders and Cedric snored loudly from the taproom, Aron and Corben sat at the bar and popped the cork off the last bottle of brandy salvaged from the catacombs.

"To friends returned home," declared Aron raising his tumbler.

"Aye sir, to returned friends," said Corben imbibing the brandy and savouring the warm tingle which flooded down his throat and through his body.

"Well Corben, it appears that now that the snake has been killed, his thralls have skulked back to their dismal abodes. We must enjoy this respite but it will only be a matter of time before another serpent glides through the Wood I fear. We must be prepared, and look for ways to press the advantage."

"Indeed sir we must," agreed the squire, his brow furrowed with concern. "Sir there is something else that has been on my mind. I must confess I've not the slightest idea how we survived that last attack. The post was deserted, you were outside the barrier when those winged devils swooped and attacked the shrine. The oath was broken. We should have been overrun!"

"Aye Corben, I was outside the barrier," replied Aron, swirling the ruby liquid before downing it with one satisfying gulp, "but you were not, and the oath states that one of unshakable faith man the post, two are not required."

"But sir, I don't understand, you are the custodian, I am a mere ..."

"Titles matter little old friend," interrupted Aron. "Aye, I am the custodian, but truth be told, over the years my faith wavered on occasion; but you my old friend were always stalwart. On the darkest of nights when I feared Amalric had abandoned us to the enemy, you were always strong. It was you, Corben, that kept the shrine safe."

For Further Reading

This issue's column is all about Inns, Taverns, and Way Stations

Inns, Taverns and Way Stations Generators:

Tavern Maker (TeamWare WIP): http://www.tavernmaker.de/eng/men-eng-inf.htm
Tavern, Inn and Pub Name Generator: http://www.mithrilandmages.com/utilities/Inns.php
Random Inn Generator: http://www.inkwellideas.com/roleplaying_tools/random_inn/
Random Tavern Generator: http://chaoticshiny.com/taverngen.php
The Telengard Tavern Generator: http://www.digital-eel.com/ttg.htm
d-Infinity Random Tavern Generator: http://d-infinity.net/digital-dice/random-tavern-generator
Here Be Taverns (Random Generator): http://www.herebetaverns.com/
Random Inn Generator: http://donjon.bin.sh/fantasy/inn/

Free Resources:

The Eagle and Child Pub (where the Inklings met):
http://scrapbook.theonering.net/scrapbook/source/Ringer_Spy_Glaurung/view/4046
The oldest tavern in Scotland: http://www.scottcalonico.com/blog/the-oldest-pub-in-scotland
118 Tavern Names: http://dungeonsmaster.com/2010/05/118-tavern-names/
Roadside Encounters: http://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/112356/100-Roadside-Encounter-Ideas
Drinking and Dining: https://www.pinterest.com/kapoweslc/add-drinking-dining-in-dregpenna/
Taverns, Inns and Castles: https://www.pinterest.com/tamntart/fantasy-architecture-references/
Taverns, Inns and a steampunk spaceship or two: https://www.pinterest.com/iceburn91/buildings/
Inn names: http://www.dragonsfoot.org/forums/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=59613
Free Tavern Map: http://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/101963/Basic-Tavern
Taverns and Inns: http://www.dragonsfoot.org/forums/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=66228
1 million Inn/Tavern Patrons: http://www.dragonsfoot.org/forums/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=31906
The Valhalla Inn and Tavern: http://www.dragonsfoot.org/forums/viewtopic.php?f=42&t=28160
Tavern gambling: https://www.reddit.com/r/adnd/comments/2giwr3/gambling_in_add/
Thirsty Dwarf Tavern: http://www.oldschooladventures.org/homebrew/autumns_reach/thirsty_dwarf.php

Free Adventures featuring Inns, Taverns and Way Stations:

The Tavern of Daednu: http://www.dragonsfoot.org/php4/archive.php?sectioninit=FE&fileid=388&watchfile=
Haunted Inn of the Little Bear: http://www.dragonsfoot.org/forums/viewtopic.php?f=42&t=27673
Gold Hill Trading Post: http://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/98594/Adventure-Module-BL12-The-Ruined-Hamlet-Terror-in-the-Gloaming?manufacturers_id=4208

Dungeon Magazine Adventures:

#1: The Elven Home (Anne Gray McCready) – secluded waystation of reclusive elves.
#12: At the Spottle Parlor (Rick Swan) – PCs are lured into a friendly game of spottle.
#18: Chadranther's Bane (Paul Hancock) – abandoned wayhouse, or trap?
#19: The Serpent's Tooth (Nigel D. Findley) – dockside tavern with a seedy reputation.
#30: A Wrastle with Bertrum (Willie Walsh) – wrestle with a troll at the Rattlesnake Inn.
#32 Herme's Bridge (Timothy Leech) – stone causeway proves a challenge for our heroes.
#40: Song of the Fens (J. Bradley Schell) – innkeeper's daughter and a mysterious marsh singer.
#51: Nbod's Room (Jeff Crook) – a local inn is haunted by the spirit of a sea captain who guards three secret teleportals.
#53: A Serenade Before Supper (Andrew Veen) – the secret of the bard at the Wayfarer's Rest Inn.
#79: Bad Seeds (Kevin Carter) – encounter at the Hawk's Shadow Inn.
#81: The Door to Darkness (James Wyatt) – uncover the secret of the Sleeping Dragon Inn.

& Magazine on the Net

The *& Publishing Group* is active in these venues:

LinkedIn: http://www.linkedin.com/company/&-publishing-group?trk=prof-following-company-logo

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/andpublishing

Google+: https://plus.google.com/u/0/b/117421612009560237481/117421612009560237481/posts

Twitter: @andmagPublishin

Tumblr: http://www.tumblr.com/blog/and-mag

Fans can get news of upcoming & publications at all of these, plus even more places:

Our forum on **OSRGaming** is always active! Most of the *&* staff members post regularly.

http://osrgaming.org/forums/viewforum.php?f=110

We have two threads on Dragonsfoot. The first is the Non-Dragonsfoot Publications, public service announcements of D&D publications not published through Dragonsfoot, where you can find news of many publications besides *& Magazine*! The second is our feedback thread.

http://www.dragonsfoot.org/forums/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=56145

http://www.dragonsfoot.org/forums/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=26003&p=1333624#p1333624

And you can find *&* news in a variety of other places!

FirstEditonDND Yahoo Group

http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/FirstEditonDND/

Pen & Paper Games

http://www.penandpapergames.com/forums/showthread.php/23274-New-old-school-D-amp-D-magazine-free?p=181105

RPG.NET

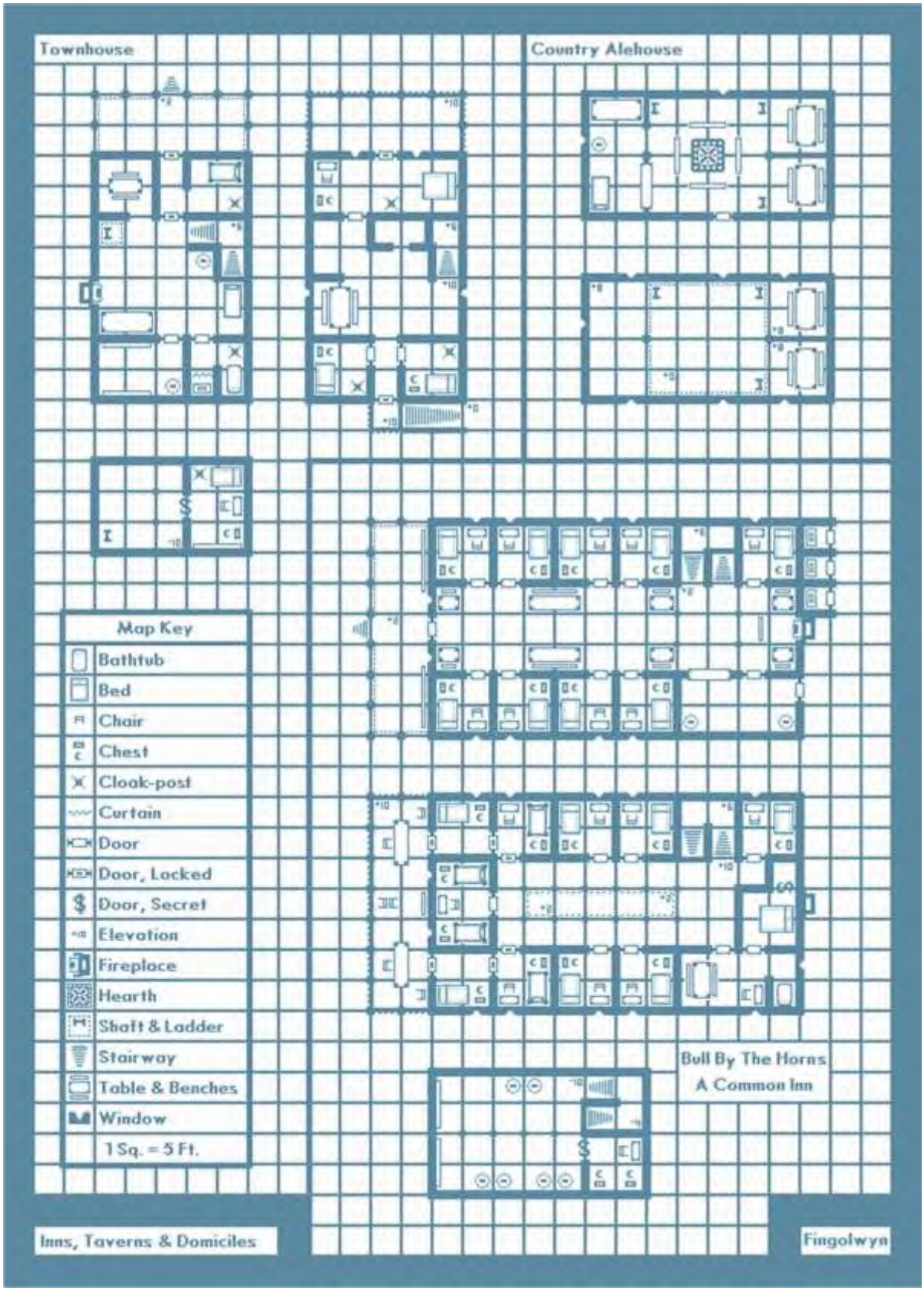
http://forum.rpg.net/showthread.php?638167-New-old-school-D-amp-D-mag-f

USENET

rec.games.frp.dnd alt.games.adndfe rec.games.frp.misc

Map 2: Inns, Taverns, & Domiciles

by M. W. Poort (AKA Fingolwyn)



Each issue of **&** has a theme, and our goal is to ensure that at least 60% of the articles match that theme.

Why?

To give our readers as much of a good thing as we can!

Themes for upcoming issues include:

- Dragons
- Fighters
- Villages and Hamlets
- Mythologies and Deities

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Coming in November 2015!

This issue may include:

The Carven

Elves of Black Shadow

Ecology of the Monster Hunter

Setting Up A Proper Dungeon

Coming in February 2016, Issue # 14:
Not Demons Nor Devils

This issue may include:

Hags of Hades

Daemon Politics

Making The God Call

The Maleficent Mature

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